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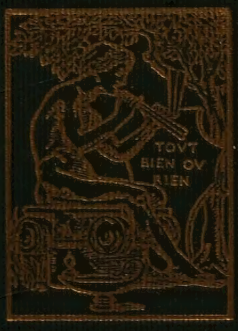

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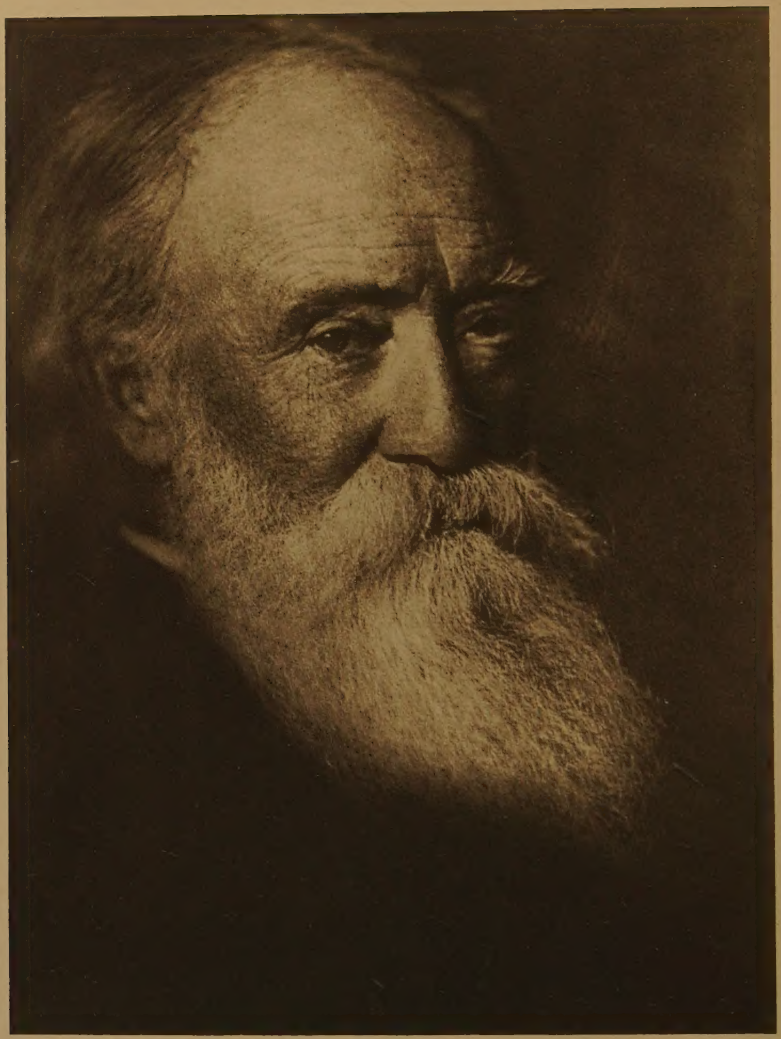

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF JOHN BURROUGHS

BY

CLARA BARRUS

Author of 'Our Friend John Burroughs,' 'John Burroughs, Boy and Man,' etc.

With Illustrations

VOLUME II

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Sweet before all else were things for thee by nature, earth, sea, stars, orbs of sun and moon.

MENANDER

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THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF JOHN BURROUGHS

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF JOHN BURROUGHS

CHAPTER XVI

THE DAWN OF A NEW CENTURY

1901

> Sing the new year in under the blue.
> Last year you sang it as gladly.
> 'New, new, new, new!' Is it then *so* new
> That you should carol so madly?
>
> TENNYSON 'The Throstle'

JOHN BURROUGHS used to say that he had been a spectator of, rather than a participator in, the times in which he had lived. Spectator though he was, we have seen him through the nineteenth century, steadily supplying something of incalculable value to an era chiefly intent upon industrial and material welfare.

A month before Burroughs was born, Martin Van Buren was inaugurated President of the United States, and a month before he died, Warren G. Harding; so that the eighty-four years of his life spanned the administrations of twenty-one of our thirty Presidents. Queen Victoria's accession to the throne of Great Britain occurred the year before his birth. He lived through her long reign, and that of Edward the Seventh, and for ten years of the reign of George the Fifth.

The lifetime of Burroughs stretched from the hand-flail and the tallow-dip to the threshing-machine and the electric light; from the stage-coach to the Pullman train and the airplane.

What amazing progress in the inventions, discoveries, and memorable events, national and international, he witnessed from 1837 to 1921! What destruction by fire and flood, by earthquake and tornado, by insurrection, rebellion, revolution; by famine, massacre, and war; what financial panics, political upheavals, accessions to power, assassinations, ab-

dications, dethronements! and, alas! what futile efforts to secure peace to a war-torn world!

As the signal national and world events unfolded before him as boy and man, kindling his interest, imagination, pity, or detestation, according to their character, they found him, if but a spectator, a keenly interested one. He followed them closely; relived them in his seclusion, as is the way of the imaginative man; and, watching their trend, usually estimated their outcome with a sagacity that bespoke much of the philosopher and something of the seer.

Four times during his life he saw his own country at war, while in that period war was visited upon the civilized world thirteen times before the cataclysm of the World War.

It was a terrible array of disasters that marked the more than sixty years in the nineteenth century, and the score of years in the twentieth, in which he lived, leading up with a ghastly *crescendo* to the World War, during which period the human heart learned what it could endure and still continue to beat.

Only a little less awful than wars were the many other disasters visited upon humanity in Burroughs's day. To these terrible events he reacted in characteristic ways: by inquiring into the causes of avoidable ones, and savagely condemning the persons or organizations whose criminal carelessness and inefficiency had permitted them; and by investigating the conditions and behavior of the unhuman forces and elements which, operating according to inherent, unalterable laws, had worked such dire results. In the face of such calamities his scorn was always roused toward those who could talk of an overruling Providence that could have prevented, but did not, such appalling suffering and loss. A Universal Beneficence he firmly believed in, but it was a Beneficence that makes fire consume as well as warm; that makes water to rise in devastating floods as well as to fall in life-giving showers; that sends the merciless tornado and the refreshing breeze; in short, a Beneficence that has ordained from the foundations of the world that the inorganic shall go its way in the leash of physical laws, heedless of the organic — the beneficence for man being that he is armed with the wit and the power to turn hostile forces to his account, or at least, to a great degree, to circumvent them.

Important as were the historical events, the inventions, and discoveries which acted indirectly upon Burroughs, and to which he reacted, the more potent influences which moulded and shaped his character and career were far different in kind — the influences that came to him from Nature, from literature, from philosophy, from religious teachings, and from science.

The heritage from his spiritual forbears of the eighteenth century was almost exclusively from Wordsworth and Carlyle; while in the nineteenth he drew his chief sustenance from Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman — yes, and from Darwin. Darwin's voyage in the Beagle was completed the year before Burroughs was born. The narrative of that voyage Burroughs conned again and again. This, and the great epoch-making 'Origin of Species,' and the 'Descent of Man,' had an incalculable bearing upon his mental development. Tyndall, Huxley, and Spencer were also conspicuous developmental factors.

Burroughs well said that Emerson was his spiritual father. The year before he was born, Emerson was setting forth his own creed in his pamphlet curiously named 'Nature'; while his famous address 'The American Scholar' was delivered a few months after the birth of Burroughs; followed in a year by his scarcely less important address before the Harvard Divinity School. Through these and other utterances, Emerson's germinal ideas were afloat upon the air like fertilizing pollen. They fructified the waiting soul of that ardent youth in the Catskills.

To Thoreau Burroughs felt far less indebted, although it is to Thoreau that he has been so often likened. He greatly admired the 'Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers,' and 'Walden' (the only volumes of Thoreau's published when Burroughs began writing about nature), but disclaimed deriving any conspicuous formative influence from them. As to Whitman, we know that the poet's influence upon him was incalculable.

The first day in the twentieth century found John Burroughs in Cambridge, Massachusetts, finishing a poem on the bluebird. The day was clear and April-like. After lunching with Dr. Samuel Cleghorn, the two walked to Boston and

back. 'A good start on the new century,' he says in his Journal.

The work of arranging his anthology ('The Songs of Nature') was going forward daily, and his own poems were rapidly blossoming. In his Journal, early in the month, he writes, 'My rhymes no longer make me tipsy — I am getting over the debauch'; and on the twentieth: 'Almost done rhyming, I think. Fourteen poems in two months.'

In the two following letters to Miss Clara Reed, written early in the year, may be traced the course of his rhyming fever:

You will be surprised to hear that I am in Cambridge. I am surprised myself to find myself still here, but I have been so unusually well, and have had such a streak of mental activity, that I am staying on and on. I still go about with my head in a swarm of rhymes. I have written nothing but verse since I have been here, but I am nearly through. I hope soon to be clothed and in my right mind.

I have written on the following subjects: Snowbirds, Hepatica, Arbutus, Hermit Thrush, Columbine, Song of the Toad, Phœbe, Swallow, Bluebird, and Crow. The Atlantic has Arbutus, Youth's Companion, Hepatica, and the Century, Snowbirds and Phœbe. The rest are under revision. I send you Hepatica for your critical judgment upon certain proposed amendments. . . . I send you many good wishes for the new year and the new century! It means so much more to you than to me.

[*J. B. to C. R.*]

Your criticism of the little poem delighted me. It is exactly to the point and will prove very helpful.

I think I shall drop the stanza beginning, 'Enduring joys cannot be had,' and the ninth, beginning, 'Her passing lasts for many a day.' I feel as you do about the 'family groups,' though it is exactly descriptive of the group of eight or ten blossoms from one root. . . .

I think I am done versifying for the present. I must not ride my Pegasus too hard — poor beast! he is quite jaded.

The March days find our author among his books and birds at Riverby. A characteristic note to Miss Juliet Patten in Washington reads:

I tapped the trees, gathered the sap, and boiled it down in the open air to the calls of bluebirds and robins, and the sugar has a flavor that only bird songs can give it.

In the spring Miss Ida M. Tarbell comes — the beginning of their friendship; Julian returns for his spring vacation; the

red-shouldered starling pipes his okalee, the fox sparrow sings, the bush sparrow trills, bluebirds call, robins laugh, and John o' Birds sits on the brow of the hill by the sap-pan, watching the white gulls go up the river, their images reflected in the water below. 'The birds are very musical,' he writes in his Journal. 'What would life be here without this companionship with the birds?'

Books are none the less his companions, and he has no hesitancy in saying what he thinks of them; witness the comment which follows:

> Frederic Harrison is said to admire this sentence of a new English writer: 'In the milk of October dawns her calm brows had been dipped.' How absurd! what wretched taste! Think of a critic like Harrison approving such stuff as that! Anything for novelty. If ever I spill milk like that in literature, I will hire some one to kick me!

The early April days find him cleaning the floor at Slabsides and making ready for guests. Soon Hiram comes, and again the brothers take up their quiet life in the woodland cabin.

The spring work in the vineyard does not keep him and 'Hud,' his Man Friday, from their annual quest for arbutus. Now the Journal notes the advent of the warblers, the annual festivals of the goldfinches and purple finches, the humming of the humblebee beetle, the arrival of the azure butterfly, the opening of marsh marigolds, the first swallow, and countless other phases in the sweet old story of spring's return.

And so, day after day, he captures the evanescent beauty through eyes that had

> 'grown sad in growing wise
> Through Mays that manhood ne'er forgets.'

The beginning of my friendship with Mr. Burroughs is marked by the following letter which I wrote him in May:

> DEAR MR. BURROUGHS,
>
> I am yielding tonight to an impulse, often suppressed before, to tell you how sincerely grateful I am for my share in the messages you have sent from time to time to your unknown friends.
>
> I can't call myself a stranger — I've known you nearly eleven years, and we have so many friends in common. I suppose I ought to mention the most aristocratic ones first, — the Orchid family, several members of which summer in this locality, — but there are a host of others, even the plebeian Skunk Cabbages, that we are both

on terms of intimacy with, so why pretend to apologize on the ground of being a stranger?

My first acquaintance with you was in 1891 when, by the hand of a friend [Dr. Smith Baker], you sent me a delicious dish of 'Strawberries.' I was harassed and ill at the time. Your strawberries whetted my appetite just as you said they would — were better than medicine to me. I devoured them greedily, and also 'Locusts and Wild Honey' as well, and (do I need to tell you?) have reached out eagerly for everything you have sent since. I also hunted around and found messages you had sent previously; and life has been infinitely richer and fuller ever since. And it all came about from that first dish of strawberries!

I don't know to what use I had put my eyes and ears before you began helping me; but since then I have learned what they are for. So why should I not thank you?

I never before yielded to an impulse to write to an author, but to-night it seems less like an intrusion — more like a paltry payment on a long-standing debt. Will you take it as such? When the dandelions laugh at you in the grass, and the meadowlarks call, and the orioles sing, '*Will you, will you really, truly,*'[1] remember that one of your grateful readers is, through these messengers, thanking you better than she can herself? 'I believe in those wingèd purposes,' and think they will carry my thanks to you.

Although I have written so much, I haven't said what I started to say at all. This letter was prompted by spending the evening with Whitman and getting invigorated, as I never fail to get when I go to him. After laying aside 'Leaves of Grass,' I took up your 'Study' and re-read your Preliminary. It was this in particular, and my gratitude for your interpretation of his poems, that prompted the letter; but the longer-standing indebtedness, you see, clamored for cancellation first; and now I will only say that Whitman's words 'itched at my ears,' perplexing, baffling, alluring me, till I was bound to understand them. Then, about three years ago, your words came and helped *so* much; and because of that help alone I owe you more than I can ever express.

Sincerely, gratefully yours

CLARA BARRUS (M.D.)

STATE HOSPITAL, MIDDLETOWN, N.Y.

His reply, for which I had hardly dared to hope, came on May 26th:

Full of self-criticism and self-dissatisfaction as I am, letters like yours of the 12th inst. always make me a little more tolerant of myself. I thank you for your kind sympathetic words. If I have helped kindle your love for Nature and deepen your appreciation of Whitman, it is a comfort to know it. The genuine responses that come to an author from his unknown readers, judging from my own

[1] Mr. Burroughs's interpretation of the oriole's song.

experience, are always very welcome. It is no intrusion but rather an inspiration.

I used to live in Middletown ('73, '74, and '75), but I found no such congenial souls there as yours seems to be. I used to walk much on those high hills west of the hospital. I assure you it is a real pleasure to know I have so warm an unknown friend there.

On June 8th I wrote again:

You were very kind to answer my letter.

I tried to make myself believe that I should not be disappointed if you did not, but I know I had a little hope hidden away that would flutter occasionally — and then came your letter!

I don't mean to presume upon your answer, but this morning I found your verses on the Columbine,[1] and they bring up so vividly my 'Columbine ridge,' that I'm just going to tell you about it: Perhaps you know the place. It is in an upland pasture, on a road northeast of the Hospital — a vertebral column of gray stone runs through the pasture, and in May this long ridge is one glowing mass of red and yellow. There they dance and sway to the music of the birds.

I always see my first tanager in the woods near there, and it was there that I chased the oven bird's *crescendo* call until I saw the dainty thing; and when I read your description of 'Teacher, *Teacher*, TEACHER, TEACHER,' I knew what I had found.

Whenever I tramp over the hills back of the Hospital, I shall feel an added pleasure in knowing that these places have been traversed by you.

This is only to tell you that I, too, saw the Columbine Dance in May, and that it was one of the most brilliant affairs of the season.

And on the next day came his reply:

It gave me pleasure to have another letter from you. You are a real Nature lover, and I always feel akin to such. Such people are my brothers, and sisters, and sweethearts. I should like to have seen your Columbine Ridge. I seem vaguely to remember the place.

A great many people come to see me at Slabsides — many who are neither brothers, nor sisters, nor sweethearts; but occasionally a real Nature lover turns up. I wish I might see your face there some day.

Some weeks later I replied, naming the month 'when the asters bloom' as a possible time for my visit.

For Mr. Burroughs that summer held a momentous event at Cambridge. Meanwhile, he and Hiram dwelt companionably at Slabsides. He records much anxiety over the grapes and currants; he attends Class Day exercises and Commence-

[1] In *Harper's Magazine* for June. See *Bird and Bough*.

ment at Vassar; more and yet more company comes to the cabin; and, at last, he starts for Cambridge.

[Journal] June 21. Class Day! A fine and novel spectacle. At night the yard illumined by thousands of Chinese lanterns. In afternoon Julian gives a little spread in his room and announces to the company his engagement to Emily Mackay.

26. Harvard Commencement. See Julian in his cap and gown file into Memorial Hall with a thousand others. He graduates *cum laude*, much to his surprise and mine. Very happy.

27. Hear the Phi Beta Kappa poet and orator, Mac Veagh — very impressive — on the value of ethical ideas in American politics — a grand discourse, but too long by one half-hour. Santayana reads a poem — mostly moonshine — nothing concrete and real about it.

29. A hot, dusty ride home, Emily with us. A purgatory of heat and dust.

In early July I received this letter:

DEAR SISTER BARRUS,

Your charming letter of the 25th of June followed me to Cambridge whither I went on the 19th to be present at the graduation of my son Julian on the 26th. We came home on the crest of the hot wave and have been stewing in it ever since until it broke a few days ago. I trust you were able to get away from your insane people and find a shady spot in Snake Lane, or amid your bobolinks. I have a cave near Slabsides where it is very cool during such weather, and I sometimes take refuge in it. I keep my milk and butter in it, and sometimes my beer. One hot Fourth of July I showed it to six young ladies who were calling upon me, and I could not get them out for two hours.

In May I went out to my old home in Roxbury to hear the bobolinks once more. They sing there in those high mountain meadows as they sing nowhere else — a longer and more fully articulated song. No doubt the bird you started up from the grass had a nest there. It is one of the hardest nests in the world to find, it is so completely a part of the meadow bottom — in color and in material. You have to explore the ground inch by inch....

I am thinking 'when the asters bloom' and when I shall see you. Do you take a vacation? I have planned to go to my old home soon for a month and see them gather the hay and to spend long days on the hills where I used to wander as a farm boy. Were you a farm boy too? If so, with what sweet memories your mind is stored. But I would be here any time I am likely to see my new sister. Late in August I hope to get a glimpse of the sea.

I have always suspected that lunacy was contagious. A friend of

mine, Dr. R. M. Bucke, who has charge of the asylum at London, Canada, has caught a little of it, I think, but you evidently have escaped so far. You know where to go to get disinfected. One bobolink will affect many crazy people. Well, I am glad you have come to me. My little poem has been coming true all my life.

With much love

JOHN BURROUGHS

To Miss Edith Brower, a magazine writer, he writes of Maeterlinck's 'Life of the Bee':

. . . A rare treat — the best book of the kind probably in existence. I lingered over it as over some rare poem. I am so thankful to you for sending it. It is in my own line and I am envious of the author. I know the bee nearly as well as he does, but how much more he has made of the subject than I ever could. I wonder if you have ever read any of my chapters on the honey-bee, in my books. But they fall far short of Maeterlinck. I must get others of his books. His philosophy is at times not quite clear to me. . . .

I am lotus-eating here — reading, loafing, climbing the hills, seeing them gather the hay, and drinking again from the fountains of my youth — glad at times, and sadly glad at others. There is always more or less pain in going back — even to the places we dearly love, as I do this. Yet the bobolinks are still singing here as I heard them in my youth. . . .

At Roxbury he and Julian, with several young men and maidens, camp overnight on Old Clump. 'But poor sleep for me,' he says; 'the Old Clump bed had not been made up since I slept there in '85, and it was hard, hard.'

A significant entry in the Journal for August 6th reads:

Go to Abigail's to dinner with Curtis and Ann. In afternoon a tall, gray-bearded man of gentle manners appears at the door and asks for me. I know him at a glance, James Oliver, my old teacher of fifty years ago. We had not met in all that time, but had corresponded, and he had sent me his picture a few years ago. . . . He seemed hale and vigorous, though near eighty. I was not one of his favorite scholars. I was eclipsed by Jay Gould, and Andrew Corbin, and others; and his appreciation now was very pleasing. My old Master had at last said, 'Well done.' He was the best teacher my youth ever knew.

Midsummer pictures are seen in entries which follow:

26. Superb August days, sailing clouds with level keels. Nail up crates all day. Red-eyed vireo still in song; hear bobolinks flying over. . . .

30. Ideal August days since my last entry — clear, warm, gentle. Elbert Hubbard here yesterday. Looks like a man of genius with his intense black eyes and long hair and smooth face — a little too intent probably to look thus. Called me 'John' and 'brother.' I like him.

Sept. 6. To Onteora. Stop with Mrs. [Elizabeth] Custer. The day hot. A fine time. Stay till Monday. The shooting of the President the one item of exciting news.

17. On the 13th came Innis and Kellogg [Charles D.] from Philadelphia. . . . Fine fellows. Kellogg a prodigy — wonderful powers of reproducing bird songs and calls; quite astonishes me. Never heard anything like it. Then he is a very winsome, lovable man. I take to him at once. . . .

CHAPTER XVII

THE MANNER OF THE MAN

1901–1902

Ah, did you once see Shelley plain?
And did he stop and speak to you?
And did you speak to him again?
How strange it seems and new!

ROBERT BROWNING

ON a day in late September I set out in eagerness for my visit to the Sage of Slabsides; but before I got off the train at West Park, where Mr. Burroughs was waiting with market-basket on arm, the day had grown gray and forbidding; and, too, I had been reading Schopenhauer on the way, and somehow felt less elated than I had hoped to feel. Shortly before the train stopped at the little hamlet, I had come upon a passage in which Schopenhauer charged the reader to note the impression made the first instant of meeting a new acquaintance — before anything the stranger should say or do could dispel the impression. The suggestion doubtless slipped entirely from mind in the excitement of that meeting, but, remembering it at night after reaching home, I tried to recall what my very first impression had been. Most vivid was the recollection of a slightly troubled look as the train pulled in and Mr. Burroughs began scanning those who were getting off — not, I confess, a look of happy expectancy; rather of uneasiness: 'Would he find this woman doctor a bit tiresome before the day was over?'

However, his almost instant recognition, his sudden smile, and quiet welcome put me at once at ease. 'So you are here — really here?' he said in a soft, pleasing voice, the tone becoming a trifle petulant as he berated the weather and said it would probably rain before the day was over. Then, looking to see if I were well shod, and warning me that it was quite a climb to Slabsides, he started off along the country road at a brisk pace, I walking happily by his side, falling behind as we left the road and climbed by the short-cut to his cabin in the hills.

I marveled at the agility with which he climbed the steep rocky stairway we soon encountered; it seemed so at variance

with his white hair and beard and his venerable look. His olive-gray clothes blended well with the tree-trunks, while his soft gray hat and 'old experienced coat,' showed long acquaintance with wind and weather.

On the way up, pointing to a rock in the distance, he confessed that he sometimes went there to sulk.

When I began nibbling a mushroom, he said, imperatively: 'Don't taste that! Are you sure it's all right? Do you really like them? They are uncanny to me — the gnomes or evil genii of the vegetable world — I give them a wide berth.'

He pointed out 'Mount Hymettus,' where he used to go on wild-honey quests. With a secret hope, I asked if there were still bee-trees there, and felt a bit aggrieved when, since there were, he did not propose a quest that day, but answered wearily, 'Yes, wild honey *is* delectable — I pursued that subject till I sucked it dry.' The John Burroughs of my books had not sucked any subject dry, and the confession puzzled me.

As we stepped into the homely rustic cabin perched on a rock above the celery garden, I had a feeling of vicarious satisfaction: here was a man who had known what he wanted to do, and had done it, and the doing had brought sweet content.

While he mended the fire, and made his simple preparations for dinner, and as we sat before the fire talking (the potatoes and onions roasting in the ashes), I studied my host.

He was then in his sixty-fifth year, of medium height,[1] with a well-knit, sturdy frame and erect carriage. His large, superbly formed head, when uncovered, was his distinguishing feature. With hat on, a casual glance and one might mistake him for a mere countryman — never with hat off. Patriarchal, one thought, on seeing that head with its fine white hair, worn a trifle long and curling softly at the neck; the white mustache, and the ample, wavy beard. The forehead was very full over the eyes; the temporal arteries were prominent. Of the face seen in profile the word 'flowing' always came to me — the line over the crown of that domed head, over the noble forehead, dipping down to the bridge of the nose, and then following that large, aquiline feature till lost in the flowing beard. As I came to see him later, on the farm where he was born, I had a fancy that this flowing line was like the gently undulating outline of his native hills.

[1] Height, five feet, seven inches.

The rather deep-set, blue-gray eyes, with flecks of brown in the iris, were not large, but were remarkable in their clearness and their steady, observant gaze — young eyes; eyes that seemed to bear on as they looked. Yet the shrewdly observant glance was kindly. The expression was friendly, wistful, anxious, merry, contemplative — according to mood; in rumination, meditative and withdrawn; at other times, bright, alert, often quizzical.

The mouth was hidden by mustache and beard. While listening intently, his lips were usually parted. The ears, anatomically perfect, delicately formed, lay close to his head. The neck was small and thin. Skin fair, pink, healthy, and fine-grained. In fact, the whole physiology showed fineness of texture and organization. The back and shoulders were sturdy, the chest erect. The wrists were peculiarly well knit. The handclasp was warm and strong. The hands, brown, firm, well-shaped, were unpliable, showing long familiarity with manual work in the open. There were small nodes on the terminal joints of certain fingers, and one little finger and an index finger were slightly incurved. (When Walter H. Page was once shown a cast of Mr. Burroughs's hand, passing his fingers gently over it he said, 'The hand of a farmer — and a poet.')

His voice was sympathetic and refined. It often had 'the dying fall.' Although when embarrassed he had a just perceptible stammer, ordinarily his speech was brisk. His greetings to friends were invariably hearty and heart-warming. Gentle as was his voice, the tone became quick and severe that day as he spoke of McKinley's assassin. I was startled, and not a little shocked, when he said savagely, 'Well, whether he is insane or not, I hope they'll hang him!' *This* from the author of 'Serene I fold my hands and wait'!

I remember how unusual the word 'April' sounded upon his lips. Until I heard him speak it, I had not realized how beautiful a word it is; and when the tulip-tree came into the conversation — liriodendron — how he lingered over it, commenting on its beauty! Likewise the word 'Unadilla.' Years later, when fishing in the Willowemoc, the beauty of that lovely stream's lovely name enhanced for him its charm: 'Thy name casts a spell upon me, Willowemoc, Willowemoc! — but we take more trout from the Mongaup!'

He was modest in bearing, in demeanor quiet and serious

(occasionally withdrawn). There was an awareness of everything around him which, taken with his observant glance, acute hearing, and ready receptivity of mind — all so unlooked for in one of his age — made one think he must be masquerading as a sexagenarian.

In repose his body fell into a relaxed position, an inner calm seeming habitual. Tranquillity seemed to envelop him as a garment; but in action he was peculiarly vigorous and direct, and, as a rule, animated; so that the venerable appearance given by the whitened hair and beard and the reflective mien was considerably dispelled when he moved or spoke. A merry twinkle often came in his eyes. I soon found he loved a good laugh — fairly laughed all over when anything provoked his mirth; and what a delightful play of humor and fancy his talk disclosed, and wit as well! How apt his words! how totally lacking in all that is stilted or affected or hackneyed — except when bored, when he could be utterly commonplace.

The impression I got of him at that first meeting was of such sincerity and naturalness as to make me want to be my own natural self with him. It was like going home to feel his instant friendliness. Something about the wrinkles around his eyes when he smiled, and certain inflections of his voice, were so like my own father's that I almost felt we must be akin. Later in the afternoon, when he wrote my name in a copy of 'Leaves of Grass' and gave it me, commenting upon the similarity of our names, and wondering if they might not originally have been the same, I felt that if such were not indeed the case — if he *were* less than kin — he was certainly more than kind. He also gave me a little book about Anne Gilchrist and Walt Whitman, and told me much of that noble, talented woman.

He asked interestedly about the life at the hospital, about the patients, their abnormal psychology — whether I did not think it a wasteful expenditure to devote one's energies to such human derelicts — failing, like so many others, to realize that many a mental invalid is restored to soundness and usefulness, returning home to do better work than before. He inquired what books I read; how I spent my leisure; if I had any hobbies; and how I came to read his books.

'Tell me all about it again,' he said, referring to things touched upon in my first letter. And then, 'We must really

gather strawberries together some day' — said with a positiveness that gave me a thrill of joy.

As I saw the broiling chicken nearing completion, I moved toward the table, intent on helping. 'Yes, if there is anything you can do there, you may,' in answer to my gesture. He had already put the plates on the hearth to warm, and washed the lettuce and celery. After finding plates for the grapes and the cake which he had brought up from Riverby, I asked, 'Where are *my* knife and fork?' 'In the cupboard,' he replied, unceremoniously, then told me I would find napkins in the chest in the alcove, and the bread in a box on the stair-landing.

'You may have some trouble with the clasp — a Vassar girl sat on the box last summer, and it hasn't been the same since.'

Never a dinner like that! He removed the roasted onions from their charred wrappings, saying, 'No, no — let me — you'll get your fingers black,' as he squeezed the steaming yellowish interiors out on our plates. 'There! hurry and salt and butter them, and see how good an onion can be when you've taken the conceit out of him.' How piping hot and savory it all was! how heartily, almost greedily, we discussed the broiled chicken, roasted potatoes and onions, while the orioles and vireos, along with Tolstoy and Maeterlinck were discussed more leisurely.

When, in helping myself to the celery, I took an outside piece, mine host reached over and, thrusting a tempting heart of celery on my plate, said reprovingly, 'Why take the outside of things when one can have the heart?'

As we rose from the table he gave Silly Sally the chicken bones and scraped the potato and onion skins into the fire, talking meanwhile of less homely things.

'You are going to help, are you?' he said, as I began clearing the table, his tone expressing relief quite as much as inquiry.

'Of course. Where is your dishcloth?'

Fumbling among the pots and pans on a side-table, he brought forth a sorry-looking cloth — mostly hole, but soon silenced my criticism by holding it up in front of his face, its circumference framing eyes that twinkled merrily, while I silently resolved to present Slabsides with a respectable dishcloth forthwith. Prosaic — yes, but dishes have to be washed, and while it was not an occupation I had been wont to associate with the poet-naturalist, I then learned that he could

wipe dishes, or roast an onion, or sweep a room, and 'make that and the action fine.'

While we had dined, a steady rain had set in, drowning my hopes of a longer woodland walk. After talking drowsily for a while, he said, 'I'll take a snooze here in my chair — maybe you'd like to curl up on the window-seat and rest a bit, or read — I only want forty winks.' The height of hospitality, that seemed to me, as I rested a bit, and dreamed, with eyes wide open, while my host dozed before the fire.

Then came the hour when he covered the burning embers and, taking a curious-looking stick from the mantel, playfully waved it over my head, saying: 'This is my magic wand. By this spell I make sure you will come again' — just as he had probably waved it over the heads of scores of Vassar students for many a year. Then down through the slippery wet woods to the train.

In a few days came the following:

My Dear Little Sister,

Your letter came this morning, and the dishcloth at noon — a sweet letter and a generous dishcloth — too generous, I am tempted to cut it in two and use part at a time, or else make a tea-towel of it. But I shan't allow you to class me with baked onions and other things that you like, and offset me with a ragged dishcloth that you don't like. Am I not better than a baked onion or broiled chicken, or anything of the sort?

. . . I, too, wished you were sitting with me that night by my open fire and sharing my long, long thoughts. Silly Sally was very attentive, but I doubt if she noticed when I sighed.

But you shall come again soon, and I will kill the fatted onion and cucumber, and the hickory logs will sing like sirens. I will meet you where I left you, and we will pick up the thread of our acquaintance at that exact spot. What days these are now — what days to go to Black Creek and row up the lake in my boat!

I will make the stool you suggest [a low stool, so he should not have to stoop so low over the fire] and only you shall sit upon it, ready to gather the pearls of wisdom which will *not* fall from my lips. With much love

John Burroughs

A bereavement came to my new friend in a few days as the following letter of October 1st shows:

It is a gypsy morning, brilliant, still, full of color; every maple is turbaned in gold or scarlet, and one longs to go forth in the spirit of endless adventure.

But my heart is heavy, I am up here at my old home on a sad errand — to bury my youngest sister who died Sunday night of typhoid — aged 58. The funeral is tomorrow. I am always more cast down than I should be by the presence of death, and the death of one of my own people crushes me. Our band of brothers and sisters — six of us till now — has not been broken for 37 years. Then I suppose I always make the most of my griefs as I do of my pleasures. I turn them and press them till they yield the last drop of poignancy. It is a bad habit, but brooding, imaginative persons like me (and you, too?) will do it. You are more truly my sister — nearer akin in spirit, than she who has just departed was, but you are not my Mother's child, and that makes a difference. But I have a very tender regard for you. . . . I wish I could see you daily. There is a nearer kinship than that of blood between us.

I am sorry to write you a sad letter. I first thought I would not write from here, or tell you of my bereavement, but it seems natural to do so. You will understand.

These scenes are very dear to me, but very pathetic. It is a place of graves. The days of my youth are all buried here. The hills look like father and mother. I roam over them in a sad sad dream. But I must cheer up and not indulge my tendency before alluded to.

Your Adirondack sketches I read with peculiar pleasure. . . . I knew you could write, and I hope you will write more. . . .

Your loving brother

J. B.

Thank you for pointing out that mistake in the W. W. book. It was the result of pure ignorance on my part. I will have it corrected. . . .

Of his sister's death he writes at length in the Journal adding:

I grieve less than I should, and grieve because I cannot grieve more. Why am I so insensible? Abigail was very dear to me, and yet my eyes are dry.

In October I went again to Slabsides and walked with Mr. Burroughs through the painted woods, staying alone at night in the cabin, preferring the novel experience to the hospitality of the neighbors in the great stone house perched on the rocks above. Loath to leave me there alone, though it was just what I wanted, Mr. Burroughs instructed me how to fix the fire in the morning, and where to find things for my breakfast.

The next morning, when he came up from Riverby, his first words on entering the cabin were: 'Why, what's the matter with your fire? Did you forget?'

'No, I've been trying, but it won't burn.'

'But why don't you put on some wood?'

'Why, that that's on now hasn't burned up yet!'

'My poor child! don't you know it takes more than one stick to make a fire?'

And he began piling on the wood and fanning it with the dust-pan, shaking with laughter, while I stood by chagrined. (I was to have had the water boiling for the wild duck he wanted to cook.) Our dinner was clearly to be delayed, and, though he made light of it to lessen my mortification, I could see it was of no small moment to him, accustomed to rigorous punctuality as to meals. While the potatoes were roasting in the ashes, we climbed to Julian's rock, and I forgot my stupidity.

At the station that afternoon while waiting with me for the train, he was accosted by a stranger who requested speech with him. After a few minutes I heard him say, 'No, sir, no, sir — I can't help you at all,' and with a repelling gesture, his arm high in the air, he abruptly walked away from the man. On rejoining me, he was much disturbed. The man was an office-seeker who had hoped through Mr. Burroughs's friendship with Roosevelt to gain some appointment, and *he had tried to bribe him!* Quite upset by the incident, he apologized for his wrath, which waxed stronger as he thought of it. His shame for the man, he said, was so great that he feared he had not sufficiently expressed his indignation. 'I shrink from pain,' he added, 'just as I shrink from giving pain; it is one of my weaknesses.'

With Julian at home again, the excursions into the wild were resumed. The Journal for October 22d runs thus:

> Mild, bright day. Julian and I go to Black Pond after our boat. A great comfort to have the boy back again, yet a mild pang comes when I think that in all that beautiful student life at Harvard he has no longer any part or lot. I went through College nearly as really as he did, and I perhaps have a tenderer feeling for the place. Think of the generations of boys that will come and go in the future, and no boy of mine among them! But I do hope that he will sometime have a boy or boys among them. To me there is a sort of halo around all college boys.

One can but smile at the wistful Celt, ever sighing for what is not. Each time that Julian had gone away to college, his father

had drunk the cup of loneliness afresh. Now that his college course was ended, he sighed at this. Looking before and after, especially after, he sighed for *what was not*. But he was soon hunting ducks on Black Creek with Julian, and with him attending the Yale football game at West Point.

In November he wrote one of those wistful, lonely letters, such as he sent to many a friend throughout the years:

Yes, what a boon if you only lived near me and could drop in here upon me in my Study where I sit alone every night, often very melancholy and hungry for companionship; or at Slabsides, where I am even more solitary. I went over there yesterday afternoon and sat a long time with Silly Sally, and dreamed and dreamed. . . .

I have not been quite well for a week, some throat trouble again and bronchitis, but not bad like last year. I shall soon shake it off. . . . If I could only be surrounded by the gentleness and consideration which you could give me, how different my life would be, and my work too. When Julian marries I hope all will be better.

When I have some proof, you shall go over it for me. I am the poorest of proof-readers.

To many a Vassar teacher and student throughout the years he sent such hospitable notes as this of November 18th to Miss Reed:

I am delighted at the prospect of seeing you so soon, and at Slabsides. I say come Wednesday if it is not stormy. But if it should be, we can charm the storm away before the open fire. There is danger of another party on Thursday. At least I said I would be home to them Thursday or Friday. If I hear they are coming Friday you could come Thursday if that day would suit you better. Bring the girls with you that you like best. I will provide the substantials of the luncheon. You can bring cake or candies and *pickles* if you want them. There is plenty of celery yet, and baked potatoes and baked onions and broiled chicken. Come at the waving of my wand, — Yes, and comb-honey is waiting in the frames. I shall be impatient till I see you,

Your loving

'GRANTHER'

In late November he finishes his poem on the downy woodpecker.

His first visit to me is recorded in his Journal for December 1st:

At the State Hospital [Middletown] with Dr. Barrus. Soft, Indian-summer-like day. Called on Captain Cox last night, a great sufferer — soon to die, but bright and vivacious as ever. Talked all the time.

2. Mild, overcast. Walk about M—— with long, sad thoughts. Dear, dead Channy was with me here 28 years ago. Nearly all my old acquaintances dead.

3. Rain, sleet, snow. Talked to the Tourist Club last night — 12 or 15 women in reception room at Hospital, to please Dr. Barrus. . . .

While in Middletown, at his friend William Vanamee's, he read the proof of 'Literary Values,' bringing it up to the hospital in the evening for me to go over it with my 'fine-toothed comb.'

I recall particularly his manner of meeting the pretty homage of a young Russian girl at the hospital. She had been reading his books during convalescence, and here he was, and she was speaking to him! Her face was radiant, and in a tremulous voice, with an awed look, she faltered, 'I never saw a great man before.' Abashed, he said humbly, 'Child, I am not a great man.'

When a friend brought two birds' nests to my rooms for him to see — an oriole's and a vireo's — Mr. Burroughs had no sooner taken them in his hands than he said, 'Here are three nests instead of two,' and, poking in the oriole's nest, he showed us the criss-cross twigs put there by Jenny Wren, and added, 'A log cabin in a palace.'

In a few days came the following letter from him:

. . . I am so glad I made the visit and saw your own place and in that delightful little room. How nicely you have feathered your nest, and what a charming nest! Mine seems cold and barren beside it; but the male has not the art of nest-building like the female.

Now I am beginning to be conscious of a great loss in not having known you years ago, or when you first began to love my books. All the beautiful springs and summers that are past and you not a part of them for me!

I am extra well, sleep like a boy, and eat like two boys. Yesterday I walked over to Slabsides through the snow and mused a long time before the cold hearth.

I shall have the pleasure of sending you a copy of my collection of nature poetry in a day or two. . . .

[*J. B. to C. B. Dec.* 11]

Your note about the 'Songs of Nature' came last night. How sharp your eyes are! I should never have seen one of those errors and omissions. I shall write them to the publishers today. I sent on your

notes on the Alaska book last week. . . . If you will allow me, I will send you all my proof in the future.

I finished Tolstoy's 'Resurrection' last night — a strong book, but an improbable story. The Academy this week has an article on Whitman which you will enjoy. Those young Englishmen write so well that they make me jealous. What a good article that was on the revival of Richardson in one of the late numbers!

About this time he gave me his Journals of the eighteen-eighties. 'No one else is interested in them,' he said; 'I would like you to have them all when I am gone.' Later, writing about them, he said:

I am truly surprised at your interest in them, but I know you would not make believe. I did not and do not, expect you to read them all — only here and there, where you get some real glimpse of me. I looked into some of them last night. They seem too sad. I seem to have put all my sunshine into the books and all my gloom into the diaries. Remember they were written for my eye alone — a sort of cemetery where I could turn and mourn over my vanished days, and vanished thoughts. . . .

Still later, when sending more of the Journals, he wrote:

If I write my Autobiography, I may want them back for a time, so mark anything you think worth using. If I don't do it, who knows but you will one day use them in writing a Life of me? . . .

The 'Life of Audubon' (Beacon Biography series) upon which he was then at work, was irksome, as were always tasks not of his own choosing.[1] Eager as he was to get it off his hands before his coming trip to Jamaica, still it was dragging. Realizing that it would facilitate his work more than he knew, I urged him to send me what he had already written, for typing; but he objected, not wishing to add to my work, and yielded only after repeated offers of help.

In further excerpts from letters and Journal may be traced his experiences and activities:

January 7. At Riverby. . . . Yesterday I worked on the Audubon in forenoon, and went over to Slabsides in afternoon. Saw . . . where Downy had drilled a new cell. His other one was taken possession of by flying squirrels, and then by a too sudden shake one day was

[1] This is the 'one book' he wrote for money, and not 'Camping and Tramping with Roosevelt,' as one critic has surmised. The Roosevelt book was written out of his affectionate regard and admiration for the man.

broken off by me. At SS [Slabsides] five quail were busy cleaning up the weed-seed. I did not tarry long there. . . .

Here I am with more proof, and another poem to copy. The proof and copy [Early May poem] you may return to Scribner's Magazine with such corrections as you think best. . . . I expect to about finish the Audubon by Saturday. I could come then if you say so. Please find out if they have 'Audubon and his Journals,' by Miss Maria R. Audubon, in the library, and also his Ornithology.

Often he wrote up his Journal after the event, as the following entry shows:

January 13. Start for Middletown. Spend eight days there in Mr. Vanamee's rooms, a delightful and profitable time.

Work on 'Literary Values' and the Audubon book. Feel unusually well. Dr. Barrus, at the Hospital, more than kind — helps me with much proof; type-writes the Audubon. A very keen, appreciative mind, of more ready service to me than any woman I ever met. Would like to write my life. I should like her to do it, if it is ever done — have named her my literary executor — the most companionable woman I have yet met in this world — reads and delights in the same books I do — a sort of feminine counterpart of myself.

As a matter of fact, the suggestion that I write his life had come from him, not me, when, after reading some of the histories I had written of our patients, he had suggested my trying my hand at an account of my first visit to Slabsides, as a preliminary — his suggestion resulting in the essays 'A Hermit in Hiding' and 'The Retreat of a Poet-Naturalist.' He continued to send on letters, memoranda, and more of the Journals, and ever after gave all his biographic data into my keeping. Much, he said, had been destroyed by mice and squirrels, purloined by souvenir-hunters, and given to friends. Still, with these inroads, the wealth of data that did survive has proved an embarrassment of riches, heavily taxing one's powers of selection.

In a letter to Joel Benton, dated from Middletown, New York, in mid-January, he gives plans for the ensuing month:

Your letter was forwarded to me here. I came here on Wednesday for a week's work in the beautiful study and library of my friend Vanamee. I am doing well, and shall get my Audubon ready before I go to Jamaica on the thirtieth. We (Julian and I) go with Mr. Charles D. Kellogg of Philadelphia.

He has been there and will be our guide and friend. Our plan is to

get a horse and buckboard and go about over the island in a sort of adventurous gypsy fashion, getting at the real native things, the country, the people, the birds, the wild life, and, I suppose, at the ticks and 'jiggers,' too; or, rather, these latter will get at us. I go simply for a good time, and a glimpse of the tropics. If I have a good time, I may write something about it, not otherwise.

During his sojourn in Middletown, when I called for him one afternoon at the Vanamee study to carry him off for some social visits, I found him absorbed in a book. As he started to put on his overcoat, hesitating, he said, 'Oh, I have got on only one cuff — does it matter?' (He had removed the other for greater ease in writing.) 'Of course it matters,' I laughed; and he meekly put on the other cuff.

'See my new clothes,' he said, half pleased, half embarrassed with them. 'Mrs. B. wouldn't let me come unless I got a new suit. I won't be comfortable in them till the new wears off.' Then, a twinkle in his eye, 'The only time Mrs. B. is proud of me is when I am dressed up — and then she is proud of my clothes.'

The little Audubon upon which he was at work aroused my enthusiasm, if not his. He was exceedingly grateful for anecdotes and comments gleaned about Audubon, which I submitted; as well as for criticism of that and of 'Literary Values,' upon which he was also at work. In fact, his gratitude was out of all proportion to the help given. Intent as he was upon the bigger things that occupy an author, he gave scant heed to the flies in the amber, while I, though prizing the amber, could see the flies. It was a novel experience to have some one set value upon the critical tendency which other friends and associates seemed to regard as objectionable, since they put one on the defensive concerning criticism they had themselves solicited. And here was John Burroughs actually valuing my small help! When he sailed for Jamaica he entrusted me with some additional work on the Audubon, and with seeing it through the press — a charge accepted proudly, though timorously.

One evening in January I went with him to see Mrs. Patrick Campbell in 'The Second Mrs. Tanqueray.' He was much moved. At the close, as we were making our way through the crowded aisles, and he heard the high-bred voices of the metropolitan women calmly discussing what had so moved us country folk, he could not suppress his impatience. Unable to

understand their lack of emotion, he exclaimed, loud enough for them to hear: 'What ails these women? Can't they *feel?*' And, grasping my hand, he fairly pulled me through the crowd. When away from the glare and commotion in the lobby, and out under the sky, he said, apologetically, 'You will never want to go anywhere with me again — I'm so chicken-hearted.' He had seen nothing in years, he said, that so met his idea of what acting should be.

CHAPTER XVIII

A JAUNT IN JAMAICA

1902

> From the South, from the flowery peninsulas, and the spice islands,
> Long having wander'd. . . .
> Now I face home again, very pleas'd and joyous.
>
> WHITMAN

IN 'A Lost February' ('Far and Near') Mr. Burroughs said of his Jamaica sojourn that he lost February and found August, Jamaica being a land of perpetual summer. He found her, at the best, but a barbaric princess. The fact is, he was not well while there, and, so dependent were his emotions upon his physical condition, that if not well, he could not have been happy in Paradise.

Excerpts from Journal-letters shared by a group of friends give his first-hand impressions:

On Delaware Bay, Jan. 30. I seem to be on the Alaskan trip again. The ship is not quite so large. My room is on the upper deck, but John Muir is not my next door neighbor. Julian and Kellogg are down stairs. I feel well and just now had to dance a little on the deck.

Manchester, Jamaica, Feb. 10. On Thursday we set out on our travels with team and wagon. Have been in the mountains four days, Julian and Kellogg walking most of the time, I joining them for long spurts. One day they walked 25 miles, fording one river twelve times.

We are now in the center of the island at an altitude of 2400 feet. It is cool and delightful. We are at the house of Colonel Hix, an American, — sup't of the schools here. They are very hospitable and we are in clover.

We start today for the Cock-pit country to see caves and sink-holes. . . . Then a canoe voyage down Black River, where we hope to capture an alligator; then to Kingston; then up to the Blue Mountains with our tent. . . . I have not yet had on my spat puttees, and have had only one tick!

I see several of our summer birds. . . . The mountain streams are clear and sparkling as those of the Catskills, but warmer. I saw Venus last night throbbing in the west, but Orion is directly overhead, and the handle of the Big Dipper is hidden beneath the horizon.

Saturday was market-day, and we saw hundreds of women and children with burdens on their heads. At a river crossing, where they had to wade, the boys set up their cameras and got a fine display of black and yellow legs.

It is a mid-summer nature all the year round — has no memory — no spring behind it, no fall before it — rank, luxuriant, but not tender and winsome — does not touch my heart like things I saw in Alaska — the beauty of a wanton, and not of a shy country lassie. . . . Not much animal life. Mocking birds everywhere and some small songsters. . . . Oranges a penny a dozen. Bananas the same. We eat fruit all day.

My head is nearly level this morning. I shall walk ten miles today. Julian is getting more out of it than I am; he is younger.

Writing to Mr. Francis H. Allen, of the Jamaican birds, he said the mockingbird (the Antillean) had no music in its soul, and added, 'The solitaire is the only Jamaican bird that impressed me — truly the voice of silence and solitude.'

Feb. 14. Last Monday night we stayed with a parson in a lonely spot on the mountains, at an altitude of 3000 feet. We slept three in a bed. I could not sleep, and at midnight got out of bed upon the floor, and, wrapped in blankets, got a little sleep. In the morning I told the boys the altitude was too great for me to sleep well. Julian insisted that that was why I took to the floor — to reduce the altitude. The fact is, it was his snoring in my ear that drove me out.

New Castle, Feb. 16–19. . . . On Saint Katherine's Peak strawberries and blackberries were blooming, and white clover, gorse, plaintain, and some orchids. Bees were gathering honey and pollen, and humming-birds darting about — one of them with a long forked tail and a yellow bill. Coffee farms lie in the folds and wrinkles of the steep mountain-sides, looking like neglected bushy fields with paths zig-zagging through them. We could see the ocean in three directions, and ships going to other worlds.

One charm of this island is these imperial British roads carved in the sides of the mountains, laid down solid and smooth in the valleys, and opening up about the only vistas to be had. . . . The woods and heights are impenetrable except along the bridle-paths, the jungle is so dense. . . .

Feb. 24. . . . On Saturday Julian and I went 12 miles in quest of discomfort and found it. . . . We rowed across the harbor to Port Henderson, 8 miles against the wind. It was rough at times, and there were sharks in the blue and violet water. At the Port we were kept to dinner by a hospitable family. . . . At 7.30 we went to our destination in the superb moonlight, over a sea as still as the Hudson, and under cliffs more rugged.

After three miles we found a narrow inlet into Salt Pond, a lonely

IN A COCOANUT GROVE IN JAMAICA, 1902

BESIDE A MOUNTAIN ROAD IN JAMAICA

lake surrounded by low wooded mountains. Here we passed the night fighting mosquitoes, wrapped in our blankets on the sand. Alligators promenaded the shore, but we could not surprise one and catch him by the tail. Hundreds of water-fowl flew and called and 'rubbered' about us; wild cattle lowed in the bush; mocking-birds sang in the moonlight; and, best of all, we saw the Southern Cross in the sky. The wildness and solitude were perfect, and the mosquitoes persistent. . . . Sunday we rowed back under clear, calm skies, and had a night of solid sleep.

The heat and sunshine are getting tiresome. I shall welcome the day of sailing — unless it is stormy.

From home writing Miss Edith Brower of being upset by the tropical climate, he said:

The tropics are not for me — no tenderness or winsomeness there. One April robin or bluebird, or one spray of arbutus, moves me more than all the birds and flowers of Jamaica.

When visiting Middletown a little later, as he stepped into the reception-room at the Hospital and noted a potted palm, he exclaimed, with a repellent gesture, 'Oh, take that away! That is Jamaica — those prickly, antagonizing things! I can't tell you how good our bare brown fields look to me — even the manure piles — after so much tropical vegetation. It is the line of farmers back of me, I suppose — my love for the good brown earth.' To one who asked if he were writing up his Jamaican experiences, he replied, 'No, no! If I should try to write now, it would be with bile instead of ink.'

CHAPTER XIX

GAIN AND LOSS

1902–1903

The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood; that live their lives
From land to land! and in my breast
Spring wakens, too; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

TENNYSON

MR. BURROUGHS was always happy if some constructive work in which he could have a hand was under way. The building of a cottage for his son at Riverby, in the spring of 1902, furnished him the needed zest. The wedding was set for October. The nest for the young couple must grow rapidly. With what joy he threw himself into the building of it! The site was chosen a few rods below and to the north of the stone dwelling, on the same slope occupied by the Bark Study and the summer-house.

In the Journal for February 18th, he writes, 'Begin digging the cellar for Julian's house today'; on March 29th, 'The cellar is nearly finished, and masons will come Monday to lay the wall.' And in a letter, March 31st, he says:

I am sitting here alone in my hermitage tonight. The only sound I hear is the cracking of the fire and the faint chorus of the peepers. I am refreshingly tired, — have walked eight or nine miles today, looking up lumber for Julian's house, part of the way through woods and across swamps (I have just been drying my feet by the open fire).

On the evening of his birthday he wrote:

MY DEAR COMRADE,

Again my birthday has come and gone, my sixty-fifth, and I am here at Slabsides, refreshingly tired. I have spent the day with Ed, my nephew, digging out stone for Julian's house. I have enjoyed it much. I am always happy in spring digging out rocks and stones to build something with. I suppose it is in my blood. Nearly every spring, when I was a boy on the old farm, Father would build a piece of new stone-wall, and clear a field of its stone. I used to take a hand in it, but I did not enjoy it then as I do now. The masons began laying up the wall this morning, and it is going along with a rush.

I hope the little box of arbutus came safely. Last night as I came up the 'short cut,' I met some children with four times as much arbutus as I found, and more than four times as fine. I was provoked. Think of those children stumbling aimlessly through the woods and beating me at my own game! I shall blindfold myself and try again. Maybe some wood-nymph will guide me. (How sweetly the chickadee calls!)

I enclose some notes and clippings about the Century essay ['Literary Values']. The hypercritical Nation said it was the most suggestive paper in the number.

During a May visit to Middletown when, with another friend, we were strolling along a wood-road, the friend exclaimed at the loveliness of a group of fringed polygalas. Plucking one, I said to her, 'I think Mrs. Dana's description of them is perfect — "as though a flock of rose-purple butterflies had alighted upon the ground."' Mr. Burroughs, a little in advance, turned and said archly, 'I think, my friend, it was J. B. who said that.' Of course it was. Mrs. Dana had simply quoted him. Chagrined at the slip, one could only lamely plead:

> Though I may forget the singer,
> I did not forget the song.

On return to Riverby he wrote:

My visit to you lingers in my mind like a delicious aroma, sweet and poetic. The real has already become the ideal. That walk was one of the memorable walks of my life. Is it Emerson who says our lives are embosomed in romance? That day is steeped through and through with romance for me. Your columbine ledge was a unique vision, and you managed so cunningly to give me a unique surprise. I thought it was some distant prospect you were preparing me for. If Wordsworth had not written the Daffodils, I would write it for those columbines. Surely they will flash upon that inward eye of mine in many days to come, and my heart will dance at the sight. Then the walk onward, through field and wood and across green hilltops — how idyllic it all seems to me! Our rest by the wall, our drink at the well, our lunch on the hill-top with the great globe of the sun just touching the mountain-top; then the whistling marmot and the night voices. It was such a pleasure to me to identify these new sounds with you. What an ear you had for 'the woodcock's evening hymn' — following the bird's course with your finger when all was blank to both my eye and ear!

The wood thrush was here yesterday, and the chebec bird. The Wake Robin Club came up, but had to return on the boat at 2 pm. They wanted to go to the Falls, after visiting Slabsides, so I put

them through their best paces. There were 21 of them, but they did not seem to care a fig for the birds — Miss Bacorn said they only wanted to see me.

I returned to Po'keepsie with them to hear Woodrow Wilson speak at the College. He spoke extremely well on Americanism. He is a very able man.

[Journal] May 7. Hiram came last night, troubled about his rupture. We go to Rondout to see the Doctor. . . . He has a poor spell coming over from the depot — grows very weak and out of breath, but rallies after we reach Hud's.

8. Hiram seems better and says he must go home. Last night he thought he was going to die, as did I. He said his work was done. . . . It is all heart-breaking to me. He has lost his grip on life. I fear to have him leave me.

In reply to a letter describing the woodcock's flight-song at twilight, he wrote enthusiastically:

No other woman I have known who would have pursued that woodcock with such enthusiasm. I could scarcely have done it myself. Three trips into the mud and darkness, and one of them alone, wooing the night-singer with the enthusiasm of the poet, and the patience of the man of science, and then ending with the rapt devotion of the mystic by lying upon the ground under the night, and gazing in silence up into the infinite heavens! I never had such a pupil before. You outdo your teacher. I casually direct your attention to a *seap*, out of the night, over a damp, stony pasture, when you repeatedly return to the spot and take up the clue, pluck out the very heart of the mystery, and write a most delightful prose idyl and nocturne. You beat me at my own game. What vivacity and interest in your recital! I think you could make a delightful short paper about it.[1] . . . If you don't, I shall want to use some of your notes in describing the song myself, in my chapter on 'American Song Birds,' in the new volume that is to be.[2] . . .

While you were having such a good time with your bird and the night, I was having a bad time with Hiram. . . . I tried to keep him here, but he said he must go — he would rather die there [at Hobart] than here. . . . How pathetic the thought of him was to me yesterday. . . . He has no money, and no home of his own. I have, and that makes me feel guilty.

Many pages of the Journal are filled with the particulars of Hiram's death, which followed soon, and with sorrowful reminiscences — a heart-breaking record:

[1] 'A Singer of the Night,' by C. B., *The Outlook*, August 8, 1903.
[2] 'Bird Songs' (*Ways of Nature*) quotes briefly from this paper.

He had been around on Sunday as usual, and at nine had taken his lamp and gone to bed,[1] and there his journey in the world had ended. He had said to Eden during the day that he should never take care of any more bees, and had told Bruce to take good care of his tools. He seemed to feel that his end was near.

I found it impossible to sleep that night more than two or three hours. I was in a strange excitement. My Hiram, my boy Hiram, as I so often called him, was gone! — the dearest one of the family to me, and how could I compose myself to sleep in the room above his dead body?

13. They put Hiram in his coffin this morning, and, after a while, I go in with Eden and look upon him. Jane comes, and goes in, too.

Oh, the calmness and repose of Death! I can no longer keep back my tears. Oh, if I had only done more for him — if I could only have another chance! How generous Death makes us! . . .

I cannot be at ease, so by and by go over to Willie's, through the fields and over the hill, the way Hiram and I had once gone a few years before. The spring beauty, and adder's tongue, and anemone were in bloom in a sap-bush I passed through.

The funeral sermon was preached by John Hubbel, a mere string of words and catch phrases that began nowhere and led nowhere. . . . Yet Eden and Jane liked it much. . . . It was a lovely day. The bobolinks were singing in the meadow in front of the house. We walked behind the hearse to the cemetery. I shall never forget my stress of emotion and grief. Jane and Eden and I were full of tears, but Curtis, I think, shed no tears. . . .

14. The morning was again frosty. After breakfast Eden and I went down to the grave. The coverlid of the turf was already pulled over dear Hiram. We stood long by his grave. A finer locality for a village cemetery I never saw. A large, gentle, gravelly knoll, with the clear brook sweeping around its base on the one side, beyond which is a beautiful rolling landscape with its green hills, its grazing herds, its dark patches of pine woods, and then the encircling mountains, still brown and leafless. I almost envy Hiram his last resting-place.

Hiram played a larger part in my life than any of the rest of my family. He was the one brother who always stuck to me, came to see

[1] In the years to come, many an evening in his Study, at Slabsides, and also at the Nest, as he would cover the embers for the night, he would repeat, tenderly and sadly, and doubtless with Hiram in mind:

'Good night! good night! as we so oft have said
Beneath this roof at midnight, in the days
That are no more, and shall no more return.
Thou hast but taken thy lamp and gone to bed;
I stay a little longer, as one stays
To cover up the embers that still burn.'

[LONGFELLOW]

me wherever I was, and wrote to me regularly. He brought to me the Old Home . . . more than all the others.

He had no intellect or judgment, was a mere child in many things; never read one of my books, but I loved him all the same. He had all my infirmities, and little of my strength; he was a dreamer, an idealist; but had no firm grip upon real life — was one of those men who are always crowded to the wall in the scramble of the world — no push or self-assertion in him.

We have camped and tramped together; we slept together as boys, and we have lived together as old men. He was their first-born, and in the Old Home stood next to Father. The work of his hands shows all over the old farm — in the walls that he laid, in the trees that he planted; in the buildings he helped erect. He was always handy with tools. He made the sleds, the stone-boats, the hay-rigging, the churning-machine. He made garden and grafted the apple trees. He loaded and pitched off all the hay for near forty years, and built all the stacks. He drilled and blasted the rocks when I was a boy. He made the sugar, and always headed up the butter in the fall. He cut up and salted the pork, and did a hundred other things in the old days on the farm.

. . . He was a dutiful son, but he grew very discontented (and with reason) at the way things went on the farm under Eden's management. But he did no better when I helped him to keep the farm (from '83 to '90, and I lost over $2000 by him). Of late years he had been greatly dependent upon me, which, I suppose, made him still dearer.

If I could only have had a home where he could have come and shared with me, and fussed with his bees, how it would have added to my enjoyment of life! I look back with such pleasure to the weeks he spent with me here one winter, when he and I boarded with the Ackers, and he worked at his bee-hives here in the fruit-house, while I wrote in my Study. The sound of his saw and hammer was music to my ears. Julian was at Harvard, and Mrs. B. in Poughkeepsie.

His death greatly enhances the burden of the Past to me. It makes it all bleed afresh. It is like losing Father and Mother over again. . .

Writing Mr. Charles E. Benton, in early June, about a recent book of his — 'As seen from the Ranks' — Mr. Burroughs said:

I read it half through the first night. I think it is a notable book, by far the best one of the kind that has appeared. It tells things one wants to know. It is such a book as *I* should have tried to write had I been in the War. It is of deep interest and value. The Gettysburg chapter is superb. I congratulate you. You should have been an author long ago. You have the rare art of putting yourself into a book.

Along with a few roses came this June letter from Slabsides:

I came over here this afternoon and seeing my roses wasting their sweetness on the desert air was seized with an impulse to send some of them to you — the roses of my boyhood.[1]

Take the first bare-footed country boy you see with home-made linen trousers and shirt, and ragged straw hat, and put some of these roses in his hand and you see me as I was 55 years ago. These are the identical roses, mind you. Sometime I will show you the bush in the old pasture where they grew.

About the visit to my Old Home in July — you do not say you will go. It would indeed be a boon, and ever memorable to me. To walk those hills and woods with you. You would shield me from the all-devouring Past . . . and you would gather material for your life of me.

I feel more and more like undertaking the Whitman Life, since you are willing to help me. . . . I will give you all his letters when you come over, and you shall make selections from them. Eldridge and Harned say I may go over their letters and material also.

. . . You see what my peculiarity, may be weakness, is — I idealize everything. The thought of a thing after it is past is more to me than the thing itself was. . . .

I recall some of his musings about June that summer, when a few of us were spending a week-end at Slabsides: 'June has never been properly voiced in poetry,' he said. 'Why can't some one make a true June poem? Why can't I?' And he sat and dreamily chanted:

'June of the meadows, daisy-flecked — June of the clover-scented wind — June of the misty, melting skies — rare and radiant June loveliness! It won't be captured, but it is ours to enjoy — what more need we ask?'

In late June, from his hermitage, he wrote:

Well, here I am at blessed Slabsides, the dwelling-place of peace and quiet, and such sweet thoughts as come to me every moment, like the breath of clover from out June meadows, and refresh and quicken my spirit. It is very cool, but very bright here.

The swifts tumble in my chimney, the robins sing without, Amasa and Julian are busy with the celery. One of my boyhood roses lies at my elbow and is eloquent of many things. . . . I am working on 'Literary Values,' and you are helping me.

I have just written out 'Waiting' for a girl in California, and the thought comes, Have I ever done it for you? So I will do it now, and put it in this letter. . . . Our lives are so fearfully and wonderfully shot through with the warp and woof of the universe, past, present, and to come! No doubt at all that our own — that which our souls crave and need, does gravitate toward us, or we toward it. . . .

[1] Transplanted from the Old Home farm.

In copying the poem he substituted a new stanza in place of the one beginning, 'The waters know their own,' which he had never quite liked. The substituted stanza, which he used for a few years, then dropped, as less free and flowing than the original one, ran as follows:

> The law of love binds every heart,
> And knits it to its utmost kin;
> Our lives cannot flow long apart
> From souls our secret souls would win.

The summer days bring many visitors to his rustic cabin. Many are mentioned by name in the Journal; again there is merely the oft-recurring sentence, 'Much company at Slabsides,' — a sentence which recurs with the same iteration that 'William stuck peas' occurs in the Journal of Dorothy Wordsworth. On July 26th he wrote of one of his visitors:

> Gerald Stanley Lee stayed Monday night with me. He is a bright, interesting man with a long, rather striking face. He is deeply moved by Whitman. His essays are suggestive, but I feel that he forces the note a little — he is almost violently individual. He asked me if I knew how long it took Whitman before he could say 'I' in that magnificent way. He wants to do it himself, but I fear he never can. His wife is a very superior woman, and writer, and teaches in Smith College.

August brought glad days and sad ones. It brought Richard Watson Gilder and his two sons for a few days of tramping, swimming, and quiet intercourse in the woodland hermitage. It saw the completion of the stone chimney of Julian's cottage; it brought tidings of the serious illness of his old comrade Myron Benton; and a few days of companionship at the Old Home with his new comrade the writer. A part of the month found him working on essays for 'Literary Values,' preparatory to autumn publication.

On that memorable first visit of mine to the Old Home, we climbed Old Clump; visited the many springs of his boyhood; walked in 'Hiram's path' in the Deacon woods; followed the pasture brook; and visited the little red schoolhouse in West Settlement. We lingered about the site of 'Grandfather's house,' and the graves of his kindred; went to the gorge at Stratton Falls where, as a boy, he got the slate for his pencils; and walked the dim aisles of the Hemlocks. And one day the

brothers, John and Curtis, and I, went fishing in Montgomery Hollow, a haunt of his boyhood. The angler took one lone trout from the stream, but he fished other streams as well, for his poem 'To the Bee Balm' was 'taken' that August day.

On the way to the mountain stream, as we passed a little house by the road, Curtis Burroughs called to an old woman standing in the door-way, 'How are ye, Mary?'

'Who's that, Curt?' asked the brother, as we drove on.

'Well, I'll be durned! Don't ye know Mary Shout?'

'That — *that old woman* Mary Shout! Why, Mary was — but it's years since I saw Mary — but — that's an old woman, Curt.'

'Yes, yes — well, you and me ain't no spring chickens, John'; and the younger brother chuckled as the latter answered, 'No, that's so, but' — and his voice trailed off into a reminiscent murmur — 'Mary Shout, Mary Shout!'

That night, on reaching the Old Home, we saw two strangers at the supper table with the family. A glance at the younger woman, and Mr. Burroughs exclaimed, 'Why, Curt, *there's* Mary Shout!'

And sure enough, seated there, rosy and smiling, was the granddaughter of the Mary Shout he had known — another Mary, too — the image of the girl he used to know!

Echoes of those days occur in a subsequent letter:

> . . . How much I missed the music last night. . . . Never did anything befall me in that room, or in this house, so sweet and poetic as your sitting there in the dim light, playing and singing those old tunes. And they all enjoyed it so much, and have spoken of it repeatedly. . . .
>
> I have made up my mind to give Julian a deed of my Riverby property, and have done with it. . . . I shall have Slabsides left, and all my books, . . . and I need no more.

In late September, after the grapes were off, preceding Mrs. Burroughs and Julian by a few days, he started for Keene Valley, in the Adirondacks, to attend his son's wedding. Excerpts from letters and Journal give glimpses of the event and the new friends he encountered there:

> The girls — Emily, Mary, and Laura [Mackay] — fell upon my neck and made me more than welcome. . . . They have invited [Edwin] Markham down to dinner on Saturday. . . . Felix Adler has a cottage here, and today we all go on a picnic up some mountain

brook. The girls were for climbing Mt Marcy, but Adler dissuaded me. . . . He said Professor [William] James got his illness in attempting it. . . .

Of Mr. Markham in his Journal, and in letters, he wrote:

Markham and I have much talk. I like him much — a large, sincere, brotherly man, democratic, American. He knows the real values. He has a much stronger faith in the future life than I have.

His acquaintance with Mr. Markham had begun the previous May when he had written, thanking him for a delightful poetic tribute [1] to him in the May 'Century.' In reply Mr. Markham wrote:

Several persons were good enough to applaud the lines, but if you had not approved them, I should have felt (to compare small things with great) like Rossini at the 'first night' of his opera, who while the crowd were applauding, looked up, tier by tier, unhappily, to see Verdi sitting silent in his stall.

[Journal] Sept. 25. Their wedding-day! Ceremony at three in little rustic chapel trimmed with ferns, mountain-ash berries, maple branches, and masses of white hydrangea.

Emily's grandfather (eighty tomorrow), officiates. A pretty affecting sight.

With what long, sad thoughts I witnessed it all — age and youth face to face under such significant conditions — the evening greeting and encouraging the morning, the fall congratulating the spring! My father and mother were married over seventy-five years ago; I was married over forty-five years ago; and now Julian and Emily begin the journey together!

At home, later, he wrote in his Journal:

Julian and Emily unpacking and gleeing over their gifts of china, cut glass, silver, checks, etc. Happy couple! When I was married our presents did not amount to one toothpick.

In early November, Benton, whose health is very precarious, writes:

How I should like to see that new cottage going up on the grounds! I can fancy the same loving, artistic care is being expended in its construction that there was in the other house, about the architectural details of which I used to put in a word now and then. Oh, how long ago that was! — those happy old days, they can, alas, never return! . . .

[1] 'A Friend of the Fields.'

I hope I shall miss none of your papers, especially the poems. How you have broken out since that first solitary gem of the early years! I cannot quite credit that the stream has been running under ground all this stretch of time. You must have been indulging in rhythmic numbers on the sly to have come forth so successfully. . . .

Still later in the month the last communication Mr. Burroughs ever received from Myron Benton contained this sentence: 'It seems to me that with each new book your fame rolls up like the snow-balls we used to trundle.' Thus the long correspondence ends, as it began, in Benton's appreciation of John Burroughs as an author.

The year drawing to a close had brought Mr. Burroughs many new friends, new subjects for his pen, and new interests, among these last his new daughter, and the establishment of his son's home there in 'Love Cote,' as the bride and groom romantically named their little brown cottage at Riverby. But whatever the gains of this year, nothing could compensate for the loss of his brother Hiram, and his more than brother, Myron Benton. Recording Benton's death on November 25th, he continued:

I dreamed vividly of him night before last — was with him somewhere; his cheeks were flushed, but he looked feeble. Before getting up this morning I planned a letter to him today. Then came word from Mr. Peters of his death yesterday a.m.

He was one of the few farmers of real culture — a man of fine literary tastes, but a born countryman and lover of the soil. Tall, quiet, canny, lingering over the flavor of things, dwelling upon the quaint, the beautiful, the picturesque, fervently attached to his old home, always adding something to its beauty — a man with the virtues and charm of rural things, keeping their traditions and legends, making much of them. Lover of the old poets and dramatists — a man with an atmosphere — gentle, genial, mellow, unobtrusive; his own native, meandering Webutuck in human form. . . . A home-brewed nature. I shall see him no more. Farewell, my beloved Myron! How often we have wrestled with the great problems together, all but breaking our teeth upon them in vain! His faith in immortality was stronger than mine. May he find it well-founded! The last letter Thoreau ever wrote was to him.

[*J. B. to C. B. November* 26]

. . . I have been writing much of the time today, though there has been an under-current of deep sadness in my soul on account of the death of Myron Benton. . . . He was my oldest and dearest friend. . . . He was an embodiment of all that is sweetest, sanest, and most

wholesome in country scenes and influences, a natural farmer and country lover, enriched by the best reading:

> 'They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead;
> They brought me bitter news to hear, and bitter tears to shed.
> I wept as I remembered how often you and I
> Had tired the sun with talking and sent him down the sky.'

With the cessation of the forty years' correspondence between John Burroughs and Myron Benton, the chief source of continuous biographic data ends, or would end but for the waxing of a new correspondence overlapping the other as that waned. With no one, not even with Whitman, had Mr. Burroughs had the full and spontaneous exchange of thought and feeling which he had with Myron Benton. All his life he wrote briefly and casually to many; but Benton was his only real correspondent during those many years; and never again, to any one, did he write in the same manner. No one met him on the same level of that rare comradeship based on the congenial temperamental qualities, combined with the intellectual and cultural gifts of Mr. Benton. However, his comradeship with the writer, and an active correspondence for ten or more succeeding years (after which there was almost daily association), preserves the continuity of the biographic data. From journal-letters to me, begun about this time, as well as from the Journal itself, the story of the subsequent years is chiefly drawn.

Other shadows and losses came with the waning year, but there came other friendships also, one with Miss May Morgan, a musician and poet, proving to be one he treasured in advancing years. Before meeting her he had written:

> She must be a rare soul. Her verses, some of them, are as rare and delicate as the finest things in nature. I urge her to publish, but she seems without ambition of this kind.

And after the meeting:

> She is a sort of Whitmanesque girl, good size, finely formed, serene in manners, and with a wide outlook upon the world. She is worth all the other women I saw in C——. She is a reader and lover of Whitman, and had much to say about him, and to ask me. She brought me more of her poems to read — some very fine ones — and told me much about her visit to Japan, where she spent four months teaching music. . . . I like her much. She was born in Missouri, and the wide, tranquil prairies have touched and shaped her spirit. She

is going to Vermont with Miss Goodwin next summer, and they may come *via* Slabsides, if am here.

December 12–19. . . . I have just been shovelling crystals. How many fair, exquisite star-forms I have crushed! Still they come down and pile up about my door. They seem today the one thing that Nature is overflowing with. They blot out the river. They go by my window like a great waving white curtain. I sit in a 'tumultuous privacy of storm.'

14th. Your soothing and healing letter came last night, and how soundly and sweetly I slept, though the storm raged without. This morning I have been fighting my way through the frost diamonds to my Study. They are piled three feet deep in places and have nearly covered the face of the river with an icy mask. I pity the birds and the homeless wild things. . . .

I am at work again. I hope to begin the Jamaica impressions this week. . . .

Monday, 15th. Two copies of the new book [1] came this morning. It looks well and has such an additional interest to me because you are so associated with it. . . . I shall send a copy to Mr. Vanamee. . . .

If I should go South this winter . . . it would focus and ripen my impressions if I could write them to you. . . .

Be at ease about me. I have found myself now and am at work. My ink flows easily, and life is worth living. . . . The heroic temper of the winter suits me. Oh, if it could only teach me a little heroism!

18. A rather pathetic letter this morning from an old fellow in M—— who writes to me occasionally. 'The stars,' he says, 'are fading from my sight, and sounds that once delighted me I hear no more. Imagination halts in its course half run, and memory fades like the twilight of evening.'

How sad! Does that fate await me, too? I ask. Do you remember Arnold's poem on growing old? It is very pathetic, but I do not believe all old men have found age quite so dismal.

There are bluebirds here this morning, five or six of them in the tree by my Study. Last week I saw a robin. This morning a poor lone quail calls near by — the last of his flock, I think. I fear I ate some of his mates on Sunday. . . .

19. A little winter wren this morning on my wood-pile, courtesying and ducking and calling out to me. We had not met since September in the Adirondacks. How I like to tell you all my little scraps of news! Bluebirds, too, feeding on the berries of poison ivy and celtis. And cedar birds also. Think of a breakfast on Rhus toxicodendron berries! . . .

[1] *Literary Values.*

The kinglet is here, too, this morning, in the hemlock near where we boiled the sap. Did you send him? . . .

Toward the close of the year, Mr. Burroughs received a letter from a lad in South Dakota, on the margin of which he wrote, 'This is a good sample of letters I often get from boys.' With the permission of the correspondent, his early letter, and the interesting sequel, are given here:

[*O. E. W. to J. B.*]

I am a boy seventeen years old and I live out here on the prairies of the Dakotas on a claim. I am a farmer's boy. I would like very much to become a naturalist, and write about birds and nature like you do.

I have read one of your books called 'Fresh Fields,' and I found it very interesting, especially the chapter entitled 'My Hunt for the Nightingale.'

When I read your book it seems just like I've found a friend at last who don't think a person's odd because he loves to ramble in the woods of a Sunday, and who'd rather lay in the sun and watch ants and prairie dogs than ask a girl to go to church with him.

What sort of an education should one whose ambition is for natural history have? . . .

I have collections of minerals and other natural history specimens, also in the summer a wild and tame flower garden.

How does a person get started to write for papers and magazines? . . .

I took a tramp last fall on a wheel through the sand hills along the Niobrara river in Nebraska, and when I got home I wrote an account of it up and sent it to the 'American Boy.' . . . They through [*sic*] it in the waste basket, and so I wrote it up again, and sent it to ——, and they published it.

But I find and see lots of interesting scenes to write about if I only knew how to get them published. My mother says to 'keep pegging away' and at last I'll succeed. I'm trying to follow that, but I feel awful blue and discouraged sometimes.

I hope you will pardon me for writing such a long letter and asking so many questions, but I feel sure you will be a friend to anyone who is striving to become a naturalist, and gladly give them all the advice you can. . . .

Mr. Burroughs replied:

My dear Young Friend,

I cannot answer all your questions now. Some of them are very hard to answer. Your mother was right, if you 'just keep pegging away' earnestly enough you will succeed. Keep your eyes and ears open, read the best books, and practice writing whenever you have

something you want to say. But don't try to publish until you are older. I was twenty-three when I began to publish my things.

An editor will not reject your piece because of any grammatical errors, if it has the real stuff in it. Get the life of Huxley and read that if you can, or the life of any other great naturalist. . . .

Many years later, the correspondent wrote Mr. Burroughs again:

Fourteen or fifteen years ago you were kind enough to answer a very boyish letter from one who was ambitious to become a naturalist. . . . When he wrote you he wanted to talk to some one about the things which interested him, because people in his neighborhood thought his interests decidedly queer and impracticable.

You wrote him a very nice and encouraging letter at a time when he needed it most, and though he has never written to thank you until now, he has certainly appreciated the encouragement many, many times.

The boy went to college to study science . . . first in his native state . . . and later in the graduate school of applied science, Bussey Institution, Harvard University. Now he is curator of plants and breeding in The Brooklyn Botanic Gardens. Largely because of your encouragement, he is interested in popularizing science, as well as in doing research work. . . .

The writer is that boy. And under a separate cover I am sending you a few specimens of my published attempts in popular writing. . . .

ORLAND E. WHITE

In a subsequent letter, giving further details in his career, the young man wrote:

Needless to say, your advice for the most part was followed, and I read the life of Huxley, a number of biographical essays of naturalists and scientists by Smiles, Darwin's Voyage on the Beagle, Bates' Amazon, etc. . . . Up to the time I read some of your books and received that letter from you, I had not particularly connected either Huxley or Darwin . . . with anything particularly fascinating. Afterwards I waded through all Darwin's best-known books. . . .

In my college days I remember how much pleasure your essay on evolution gave me. . . . The title was 'The Long Road.' . . . I often think how much mischief it kept me away from, in addition to the other 'goods' it did me, so again I thank you for that letter to the South Dakota boy.

I shall certainly avail myself, if the fates permit, of your kind invitation to drop in on you some summer day . . . and now, Mr. Burroughs, this letter needs no answer, and I wouldn't want to impose on your time and take it away from other boys that may need your encouragement. . . .

In an exchange of letters a few years later, Mr. Burroughs came to respect the opinions of the young man so much that he sent him one of his own papers for criticism. He regarded the young man's notes and comments of distinct value to him.

After the grown man visited Mr. Burroughs — long after — he wrote:

My earthly gods have been disappearing as I know the world better, and I was always afraid when I met him that another might go. But, as you know, it didn't. I'll never forget our visit to West Park, the afternoon's conversation, and the little dinner, and the waning night when Mr. Burroughs insisted on lighting Professor B—— and myself to the road. And when we were again alone, B—— said to me, 'Well, he *was* real, wasn't he!' It is hard to understand, after all his experiences, how he remained so natural, so absolutely unaffected. I think of him as I do of Thoreau, Emerson, and Gilbert White. Nature to him was so sacred, a thing to be reverenced. . . .

He was my boyhood hero, and I am glad to say that contact in maturity has not altered, but has increased my respect and love for him.

On the first day of the new year, the Annalist records:

Go to N.Y. to attend Sorosis breakfast with Mrs. [John Lewis] Childs. Meet Miss [Josephine Dodge] Daskam — a handsome girl and a genius, I think. Stay with the Childs till the 3d, then to N.Y. Stay with Miss Stephens till the 7th. See many people. Go to see Mrs. Fiske (too stagey) and Julia Marlowe — Julia very lovable and sweet. The most natural acting I have seen in a long time — excellent.

He wrote of having heard Edward MacDowell play, saying:

You know I do not care for the piano, but McDowell is a great performer. He clawed more music out of it than I ever saw done before. You may know him. I never heard of him before. Mrs. C[hilds] thinks he is the coming man in the musical world.

In mid-January, concerning a proposed trip to Florida:

I shall be almost ashamed to sneak off to Florida if I keep as well as I am now. I am fifty per cent better than last winter. . . . Your suggestion about my Autobiography pleases me immensely. If ever I could do it, it would be in letters to you and for you. When I get clear of some other things, I will try it. You make me *want* to do it.

On the appearance of 'Literary Values' a reviewer said its author wrote as engagingly on 'Mere Literature' as on the

robin, the squirrel, or the honey-bee. When a review of it by an English critic came to his notice, he wrote humbly:

Such a verdict as this of Douglas Sladen always surprises me. Can it be true, I ask, that my books are worthy of this high praise? Candidly I do not think they are. They are honest and sincere, and they have a certain freshness and detachment from the fret and fever of the world, but they are lacking in many other qualities.

A Florida Sojourn

Early in 1903, Mr. Burroughs spent some time in Florida with his friend John Lewis Childs. Events and impressions of the new scenes are chronicled in the accompanying excerpts from journal-letters.

So poor, untidy, dissheveled the land looked in S.C. — endless pine and scrub and oak barrens, on a yellow, sandy, unfertile-looking soil. . . . A dense fog enveloped the land. Out of this loomed the most hag-like and weird-looking dead pine trees — such an expression of woe! almost Dantesque. As if they had perished in the agony of some great cataclysm. . . .

In Georgia the live-oaks begin to be seen, and the moss-draped cypresses. Occasionally in the woods a low tree of delicate pink bloom, then masses of the red bloom of the swamp maple, but apparently no end to the loose and torn pine-barrens. . . .

Sunday P.M. Here we are taking our ease in our Inn (St Augustine). . . . We have just been out to the old gates and the fort. . . . I remember that Emerson came here one winter. I wonder where he walked upon the beach. . . .

Oak Lodge, Feb. 17. We reached this delightful place last night. Mrs. Latham's man met us with a sailboat at Grant. There were four of us, Mr. [William] Beebe and his young wife — a Cornell girl — came on the same train bound for the same place.[1]

What a delightful sail we had across Indian River — 4 miles, in the soft, warm air, a fine breeze blowing, the western sky all aglow, and toward the last Venus burning there on that saffron background.

Sometimes the boat almost took in water, it blew so, but she was well managed. It was quite dark when we reached the little dock up a broad shallow creek and saw the lights of the house amid the trees — a grove of live-oaks and palmettos. Mrs. L[atham] is a character — about my own age — a widow with a married daughter

[1] Mr. Beebe writes how thrilled he was at meeting Mr. Burroughs in Florida, and how he was impressed with the way 'he had concentrated his life and mind upon the things immediately around him. . . . I recall my astonishment at his not knowing what ant-lions and manatees were, and my tremendous pride at being able to tell him.'

living with her — born in Oneida county, N.Y. Educated in Mass. She looks like an alert N.E. farm-wife. She has had so many scientific men here for so many years that she is well up in the natural history of the country. She does a good deal of collecting for Bronx Park, and for museums.

17. The event of the day was the firing of the saw palmetto scrub, a strip of land about a mile wide, and over five miles long, half the width covered with a forest of palmetto intermingled with live-oak, the other half, on the side next the sea, mainly covered with saw palmetto. . . . It was this strip next the sea that was to be fired, that a new growth might yield a better crop of palmetto berries — a crop which Mrs. Latham gathers, dries, and ships to druggists in N.Y. by the ton.

After dinner we sallied forth, the young men with guns to kill any game the fire might drive from cover; Mr. Childs with his gun, Mr. Beebe and his wife, and myself. Mrs. L. carried a rake and led the gang.

The gunners went down the broad path through the scrub, and arranged themselves along it, ready to kill the bears and 'coons and panthers as they should show themselves.

Presently vast columns of smoke blackened the sky. A strong north wind drove the fire forward. Soon we saw the flames leaping, and heard the fire crackling . . . the fire came slow — much slower than a prairie fire. As it progressed our expectations increased. In half an hour the smoke reached us, but no game appeared, only a few frightened cat birds hurried by; finally a rabbit emerged, and was shot; then a wood-rat or two hurried across the path. The smoke now so enveloped us that we began to flee, the fire swept on down, leapt over the path and continued its southern march.

A neighbor, one mile above, had fired his scrub also, and there was danger that the fire would sweep down upon us, get into the palmetto grove, and even reach the house. . . . Mrs. Latham and three of the men were up all night, watching and checking the fire. . . .

Raven-Nest, Manatee, Florida, February 22. Mine host is a terrible bore at times, yet an amusing character. Here comes in my amiable duplicity, when I appear not to be bored when I am. He is 69, looks much older. He has been run over by the cars, had a leg broken, part of his left hand taken off and blinded in one eye. Then he is deaf as a post and wants to talk to you all the time.

His voice is harsh and crude and his enunciation very indistinct, like that of most people who cannot hear their own speech. His voice has no resonance, the nasal passages seem stopped. 'By Got, Jot, I am glad you came — my grand children think as much of you as I do.' He is from N.H. and made his money by knitting-machines of his own invention. As a boy he knew Daniel Webster, and he never tires of talking of him. He read me Webster's Will the first night I came. . . .

Feb. 25. You found Florida much more beautiful than I seem to have found it. The scenery does not appeal to me. Nature is too crude and harsh; she has not been subdued and tamed by man, but torn and mutilated by him. She has not yet wholly emerged from the water. She is yet half saurian. Some of her vegetable forms suggest reptiles. We saw palmettoes creep over the ground like huge hairy worms, and the cabbage palmettos are such shiftless, untidy trees! Then the soil!

The soil I walk upon plays an important part in my life. I strike roots into it if it is good. I draw sustenance from it. But I never could strike roots into this sand-heap; and my life would stagnate in this flat country — probably in any flat country. The most beautiful things here are the live-oaks with their long gray beards of swaying moss. They suggest Walt Whitman.

Letters occasioned by his essay 'Real and Sham Natural History' in the March 'Atlantic' came piling in on his return from Florida. The 'great matter' kindled by this 'little fire' is treated in the following chapter.

To Miss Ludella Peck, he wrote appreciatively:

I think you are about the most steadfast and appreciative friend I have. No one else writes me such birthday letters as you do. They always touch my heart; they always breathe a sympathy and a feeling for nature like my own; and they are always tinged with that World-sorrow and Life sorrow that I also know well. It deepens with me as my years go by, and I suppose will continue so to the end. . . . But how sweet each returning spring. What a mingled emotion of sadness and joy it begets!

I am reading our friend Stanley Lee's essays on The Lost Art of Reading. I do wish he would not make such a violent effort to startle me out of my boots. He cannot be easy and simple for two minutes at a time. Yet I find much that is suggestive and stimulating in his book.

CHAPTER XX

THE DEFENDER OF NATURE

1903–1907

To gild refinèd gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet,
To smooth the ice, or add another hue
Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.

SHAKESPEARE

WITH the dawn of the new century, nature books were piling higher and higher, while nature-study, broadening and salutary as it is, was in danger of becoming a farce. For certain writers began mingling the literary and scientific treatment of their subject to the detriment of exact knowledge, however entertaining it might be as literature. Books in which fiction and fact are dextrously interwoven, are particularly misleading to the reader who cannot determine when he crosses the line of fact into the realm of make-believe. Stories of animals frankly put out as imaginative fiction are in a class by themselves, but to claim them true as natural history, is to make a farce of nature-study; yet at the period under consideration unwary readers were assimilating quantities of this highly seasoned, sugar-coated natural history.

The truth-loving type of mind agrees with Whitman — beside 'facts properly told, how mean appear all romances'; but the 'facts properly told' were at this time in danger of appearing 'mean' beside the startling accounts offered by the nature romancers.

The most astonishing tales of the animals were declared to be true. The lower animals were made to express sorrow, rage, revenge; were put to school and 'taught' by their parents that which they already knew by instinct; frogs were said to jump and catch flying swallows and white-throats; foxes to ride several hundred yards upon the backs of sheep; to lure a hound over a railroad trestle just in time to be caught by a passing train; wild lynxes fed out of one's hand; orioles built nests that could give a sailor points in knot-tying; heart-to-

heart talks were held with blue jays; bald eagles allowed themselves to be stroked by the hand; woodcocks put their broken legs in plaster casts and stood like a stork patiently waiting for the mud to set; dogs were depicted as tool-using animals; mustangs committed suicide; mother foxes poisoned their captive young when unable to liberate them; sick caribou sought out ancestral burial spots in the woods and laid themselves down to die exactly above the bones of their forbears — on and on through an array of 'yarns' that made the lower animals seem to apprehend fully the meaning of life and death, to deliberate between the choice of good and evil, in fact to have almost the entire human psychology.

No wonder these accounts of a wildly improbable outdoor world incurred the censure of right-minded naturalists and educators. Each thought it high time that some one interfered, yet each hesitated, dreading to cast the first stone.

It may be remembered that even at the age of nineteen, in his first appearance in print — 'Vagaries *viz* Spiritualism' — John Burroughs had shown impatience at unreasoning credulity, thus foreshadowing, as it were, the controversy on natural-history romancing which he set going in 1903, in 'Real and Sham Natural History.' [1]

In this controversy something of a parallel may be traced to a period in the career of Sainte-Beuve when he relentlessly pursued Chateaubriand and Lamartine on recognizing in them influences inimical to public welfare. Detecting their sentimentalities, their want of sincerity, in a word, their unsoundness, the courteous Frenchman laid aside his urbanity and criticized them unsparingly when most readers were carried away with them.

The readers of Mr. Burroughs, accustomed to his urbanity, were not a little startled when, in that 'Atlantic' paper, they found him upon the war-path, scalping-knife in hand. With fiction undisguised, he explained, he had no quarrel; but for fiction masquerading as natural history, he had the utmost scorn. The young were being corrupted, and the romances were all the more pernicious for the modicum of truth they contained. This doughty defender of Nature showed all the fight and fury of a mother bird when her young are menaced; he protested when a kingfisher was maligned; and would not

[1] March *Atlantic.*

suffer even a porcupine to be slandered without bristling up in its defense. Still, it was an unpleasant task he had set himself.

He was probably the one among all nature writers and scientists who could do this service so effectually; for, although there were many strict naturalists — ornithologists, zoölogists, comparative psychologists, explorers, and others — who would have been more competent to overhaul the culprits in special fields, he had been writing upon natural history for some forty years; his interests covered many fields; and his work, from its background of patient, painstaking observation, had ever combined, with its charm of interpretation, fidelity to facts. Without in the least exalting the lower animals to the human sphere, he had sympathetically related them to our lives. Teachers, preachers, naturalists, editors, and educators, recognizing his fitness for the unenviable task, rejoiced that at last he had applied a drastic remedy for the spreading distemper.

'I am sure you never did a more honest or conscientious thing in your life,' wrote Richard Watson Gilder. Hamilton Wright Mabie said: 'It took the kind of courage in which most of us are lacking — the courage to give pain as a matter of duty. You did your work with great skill.'

Certain writers confessed they had been itching to do the very thing Mr. Burroughs had done, but had been deterred for fear their motives would be questioned. The scientists felt that they could not cope with the literary gifts of the romancers, and that their protests would be but thankless tasks. It should be remembered, however, that Mr. Ernest Ingersoll, in the 'Book Buyer' for December, 1902, had taken his courage in his hands, and scored one reckless and irresponsible romancer some three months before Mr. Burroughs took up the cudgels for Nature. After the attack by Burroughs, leading scientists in their special fields in timely papers in 'Science,' and other periodicals, supported the pioneer paper.[1]

When sending on the 'Real and Sham' article for typing, its author wrote:

Will this thick bundle of manuscript frighten you? I have more of it, but did not want to break your back at once. Copy it at your

[1] Some authorities felt that Mr. Burroughs had not sufficiently differentiated between the two chief offenders; and he himself acknowledged that, failing in this, he had seemed to be too severe upon one whose work had in the main, great interest and value.

leisure, then read and criticize to your heart's content. Am I too severe with —— and ——? Do I show any bad blood? Be severe with me, but just, — as I would be with them.

He toned down the paper then and later; but Mr. Bliss Perry, then editor of the 'Atlantic,' still found it 'a trifle ill-natured,' with here and there 'a strain of peevishness'; so when sending it on for retyping, Mr. Burroughs urged:

See if you can help me to turn some of the frowns to smiles — the smile of sarcasm. I shall send you the proof the day it comes, and will ask you to hurry it back with your suggestions.

Even after further tempering of the wind, he said of one of his shorn victims:

Poor devil! I begin to feel sympathy for him. I'm sorry the article is so blunt and savage, but I couldn't deal with [him] in any other way.

Before the magazine came out, but after it was too late further to mend his literary manners, he wrote regretfully:

I worry at times over my Atlantic article — for fear I have overdone it, and showed too much temper. I think I could do it over now, laugh more and frown less. I am reading Darwin again, and a German book called Animal Play, and I find a few things that might give some color of truth to some of ——'s stories.

Months later, to one who was preparing a paper on the controversy, Mr. Burroughs wrote, 'Say a good word for poor ——, if you can.' He even pointed out a passage in a certain authority which could be quoted against himself, in support of one of the tales to which he had taken exception! Like Darwin, he was so eager for the truth, he welcomed anything that proved him in the wrong.

President Roosevelt was among the first to commend the 'Real and Sham' paper. He was 'delighted' with it; had long wished that something of the kind should be written; yet he wondered if Mr. Burroughs had allowed sufficiently for the extraordinary change made in the habits of wild animals through their experiences with man. He followed with a long discussion on this and kindred points; he thought that Mr. Burroughs had praised over-much certain writers and pointed out where he thought they, too, were to be caught napping. It

was this letter which contained the invitation to the Yellowstone, and to which Mr. Burroughs replied on March 19th:[1]

Your letter gave me very great pleasure. I shall never cease to marvel at the variety of your interests and the extent of your knowledge — these, with your amazing energy and activity form one of the most noteworthy things in current American history — and one of the most promising. You seem to be able to discipline and correct any one of us in his own chosen field. My Atlantic paper had some hasty streaks in it. I tried to correct some of them in a second 'revise,' but was too late to get them in. I know you are right in all the points you make. I know about the tameness of the birds in uninhabited islands, but I had forgotten, if I ever knew, about the tameness of the beasts. I had forgotten also the incident you refer to in Mr. Warner's story of the deer hunt.

I have just had an approving letter from Andrew J. Stone, who has spent years in the Far North along the shores of the Arctic Ocean. I hope soon to have a talk with him on the wild animals of that region.

The fear of man was of course an acquired fear among the wild animals, but fear of each other — of their natural enemies — must have been instinctive in all of them. It is said that if you stroke a dog, and then put your hand into a box containing kittens who have never seen or known a dog, they will put up their backs and spit at it instantly.

In anything like a complete survey of recent contributions to our natural history, your own hunting books must hold a permanent place. In your Scribner articles describing your hunt of the cougar, I learned more of the ways and character of that beast, and of the bob-cat, than I ever knew before — to say nothing of the light you throw upon the individuality of dogs.

It is more than kind of you to ask me to go with you to the Yellowstone Park this spring. Of course I should like to go, if there are no 'if's' in the way. I am no chicken, and seem to be able to tramp and climb mountains as well as ever I could. I don't kill game as I used to, but I can eat my share of it. . . .

An active correspondence on these topics was carried on thereafter for several years between Burroughs and Roosevelt. At the outset Roosevelt wrote vigorous protests to certain magazine editors who were giving publicity to articles which he thought would lend aid and comfort to the enemies of truth. To one editor he wrote that, although he could not engage in a public altercation while he was President, he felt it his duty to enter a personal protest against such arrant non-

[1] I am indebted to Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt for permission to examine the letters of Mr. Burroughs to Colonel Roosevelt.

sense as he had printed. After that he made strenuous efforts to keep out of the fray. However, as time passed, and more and more shameless tales were perpetrated, seemingly in sheer bravado, he could not hold his peace, and before his term as President expired, he wielded the Big Stick against the 'nature fakers.'

Not the least interest attaching to the voluminous correspondence between Burroughs and Roosevelt on these topics is due to the revelation of the impetuous Roosevelt enjoining moderation and caution upon the staid, conservative Burroughs. Concerned lest his friend lay himself open to criticism by unguarded generalizations, Roosevelt urges him to let his exposure and refutation be so carefully drawn that his opponents can point to no exceptions, which they would surely claim would vitiate all his criticism.

Burroughs and Roosevelt differed somewhat concerning certain aspects of the mooted questions, and discussed these differences candidly. Early in June Burroughs wrote Roosevelt in part as follows:

> I have written another long paper on real and sham natural history — a much more valuable paper, I think, than the other. I have tried to settle certain things — to show just what part instinct and imitation and example play in the lives of the animals, and what the real school of the woods is; and if I have not shown the falsity of the notion that animals consciously teach their young, then I am greatly mistaken. The school of the woods is to be found in the play of animals, which is instinctive, and always along the line of their future activities.

Again, a few days later:

> I thank you for sending me Mr. G——'s reply to your letter upon 'Hermit.' I am glad to see him spunk up and try to defend himself, but I wish he could have made a better defense. Of one thing I am certain, G—— knows little at first-hand of the every day wild life around us. He evidently credits most of 'Hermit's' tales. He ought to know that what captive birds will eat in one aviary, where they live abnormal lives, is no guide to what they eat in a state of wild nature. No insectivorous bird ever ate dry bread from choice.
>
> Another thing: I will stake my reputation as an observer of nature upon this statement: There is nothing in the treatment of their young by the wild creatures, or by the domestic animals, that can be called training or instruction, as we use those words in our human relations. Persons who report such training or teaching always supply something to the observations. I see —— —— is to have

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something on the questions raised by my Atlantic article in the next Outing. No doubt he will take sides with ——, as he printed two of his absurd articles that I criticized. I doubt if —— knows anything intimately of our common wild life. I find that the real observers are as rare as the real poets. So few persons know or can tell exactly what they see. So few can draw the right inferences from an observed fact. So few can help reading their own thoughts or preconceptions into what they see. Only a trained mind can be trusted to report things as they are. Hunters and trappers and woodsmen can tell you the ways and habits of the particular game they pursue, but of disinterested observation they are not, as a rule, capable.

When you have a leisure moment, if you ever do have such, read ——'s paper in this week's —— on Animals at Home. That man only has to set his foot in the woods when all the wild creatures swarm around him, eager to show off. They get up private theatricals just to amuse him, — deer, moose, caribou, bears — all besiege him, and do the most unheard of things before him. He is the most arrant humbug that ever wrote a book.

I think I shall write another article by and by, not upon ——, but upon trustworthy observers, or something akin to that.

Some weeks later he writes Roosevelt that he has felt compelled to controvert one point in his previous letter, from which he has quoted in an article under preparation — the teaching idea. Enclosing what he has already written, he says he will send the whole article when it is finished. He will, he says, omit all mention of his opponents, 'although that fake oriole's nest is such good game.'

He did omit all names from the essay, but a reviewer, commenting on his failure to name names, said it suggested the expostulations of the colored preacher: 'Ef dat young pusson in de yaller dress, settin' in de right-han' pew, doan' stop whisperin', I'll be fo'ced to 'dentify her.'

Roosevelt engages in further discussion. He qualifies some of his previous statements, and says he thinks the differences between them are largely those of terminology; that perhaps the examples he had given of 'unconscious teaching' would more properly be ascribed to the communication of emotion than of knowledge. However, he thinks no harm will come from its being known that he and Burroughs differ on that point, their difference, since the point is so important a one, will perhaps serve all the more to attract attention to it. He emphasizes that Burroughs is 'an infinitely more competent observer' than he is, but that all honest observation, by one at all capa-

ble of seeing things as they are, is of service; and he shrewdly observes that the very fact that they, as friends, differ in some particulars, may serve to show that Burroughs is not quarreling with certain writers because they differ with him in matters of opinion (though he finds it necessary to controvert that opinion), but that his quarrel is with those who deliberately falsify facts, or put down sheer inventions, and, from such falsifications and inventions as premises, deduce ridiculous conclusions.

In subsequent letters Mr. Burroughs tells the President of his forthcoming articles on these topics in 'Harper's,' the 'Century,' and the 'Atlantic.' He hopes he has now had his say, except for short articles in 'Outing.' Then, changing the subject, he descants on Woodland Valley in the Catskills as a haven for the President — there where air and water are the sweetest under heaven; with plenty of high mountains with bears on them; one of the best trout-streams in the State; and miles on miles of primitive woods. A camp in that region, where Roosevelt could alternate sea and mountain climate, would, after the next four years, he urges, give him a needed bath in 'Nature's primal sanities.'

When the controversial fire was apparently dying down, along came another letter from Roosevelt — 'just a line to blow off steam.' He had come across two more articles by one of the natural-history romancers, and an advertisement of a new book by him, which had exasperated him. It was 'utterly infamous' that reputable magazine editors would publish such 'outrageous falsehoods.' The article which particularly roused his ire was one dealing with the Canada lynx, which, he declared, had no more right to be called natural history than has the account of the roc-catching elephants in the Arabian Nights tales. Averring that Mr. Burroughs had performed a real public service when he attacked such unprincipled writers, he vowed that if the chance ever should come (though hardly in a year when he had so many legitimate enemies to fire at), he should take Burroughs's article as a text and 'skin —— alive.' Subsequently he writes at length of the doings of lynxes and lucivees, then says, 'Now I must return to Panama, and kindred subjects, and leave lucivees, bob cats, etc., for a year to come!'

When about to publish his 'Outdoor Pastimes of an Amer-

ican Hunter,' Roosevelt asked Mr. Burroughs's permission to dedicate the book to him, to which request, the latter added:

> Of course I shall be more than glad to have you dedicate your volume to me. I know it will be a solid contribution to natural history, as well as to the literature of big-game hunting — all your hunting books are that.

When his 'Gay Plumes and Dull' came out in the 'Atlantic' (May, 1905), and another natural-history essay in the June 'Cosmopolitan,' Mr. Burroughs asked Roosevelt what he thought of them, urging him to take him up on any points if he could, adding, 'I am only searching for the truth about the animals.'

In September of that year, the friends still continuing their discussions, Roosevelt writes Mr. Burroughs that he must either come to Washington, or to Oyster Bay the next summer, so that they can go over the question of the intellect and the moral sense in animals.

As Dr. Frank M. Chapman said, it soon began to look as though in trying to stamp out the fire, Mr. Burroughs had really scattered it, for the original culprits began to publish even more preposterous stories than those first criticized; unknown writers followed with fake tales of the wild creatures, and fake photographs; stuffed crows, quail, and partridges were posed as live birds in their native haunts; and from time to time leading magazines gave space to writers whose ignorance, as Roosevelt complained, was only equaled by their mendacity. However, the warfare continuing, victories were gradually gained in many and diverse fields. The work of one of the writers who had received a generous share of the original criticism took on a distinctly more careful tone, while his publication, a few years later, of a serious and valuable contribution to natural history, showed not only a tacit acknowledgment of a not unmerited rebuke, but also an earnest purpose to measure up to the high standards demanded of him who writes upon natural history.

Continuing to read more and more widely about animal life, and to observe more and more closely; to check up himself, as well as others, Mr. Burroughs, for several subsequent years, followed almost entirely the questions connected with animal behavior and animal intelligence. For a time he and his son

edited a department in 'Outing,' where various natural-history questions were considered. The essays in 'Ways of Nature,' and some in 'Leaf and Tendril,' were the outcome of the thoughts and inquiries set going by the initial essay, 'Real and Sham Natural History.' That widely discussed paper, as the author pointed out in his Preface to 'Ways of Nature,' had borne fruit of various kinds, the most of which was wholesome and good, though some had proved bitter and acrid.

While the acrimonious side of the controversy was rife, the amusing side contributed to the gayety of the nation. Oliver Herford said he was going to write a book on 'How to tell the Wild Flowers from the Birds'; and later Professor Robert Williams Wood did bring out an absurdly funny one on this theme. 'Life' published heart-to-heart talks with one of the chastised ones; Myrtle Reed, in the 'Critic,' had a clever skit on 'Studies in Unnatural History — Little Upsidaisi, by Sit-down Johnson-Johnson-Sitdown.' Amusing verses, 'Nature Fakirs in Vermont,' by Mr. Daniel L. Cady appeared, two stanzas of which ran as follows:

'I think I've read about enough
Of this denatured "Nature" stuff;
I don't desire no city chap
That's never set a woodchuck trap
To write a piece for me that tells
That woodchucks lay their eggs in wells;
That eels are fond of pusly greens,
And chipmunks live on pork and beans.
. . . . . .

'To have a skinny chap come round
A-wearin' specks that weigh a pound,
And say the cuckoos "put him through"
When you have never heard but two,
And claim the lady-slippers clog
His feet in almost every bog,
Is more than flesh and blood can stand
In Ethan Allen's honest land.'

An anonymous contribution on 'Nature-Study,' in the 'Smart Set,' ran thus:

'A son of Ananias wrote
A nature-study book;
He was a liar of some note,
A literary crook
Who photographed the mountain goat,
And fished without a hook.

'He told his gunless story well,
It caught me like a charm;
In nature-study I'd excel —
No living thing I'd harm.
I hurried off to wood and dell,
His book beneath my arm.

'The fond and fair mosquito came
Desiring to be fed;
The merry hornet played a game
Of tag about my head;
The centipede was quick to claim
A shelter in my bed.

'The cordial ants upon whose hill
I slumbered, welcomed me;
The poison ivy by the rill
I analyzed with glee;
And though the mushroom made me ill,
'Twas beautiful to see.

'A list of birdies I compiled
While they devoured my fruit;
And on my chicks the weasel smiled —
He knew I scorned to shoot;
The moose that tossed me seemed a mild
And well-intentioned brute.

'Remember, little children, then,
'Tis wrong to tease the bat;
Embrace the adder in his den,
And feed the pleasant rat;
Vex not the birds with scarecrow men;
Be gentle to the gnat.

'Oh, rub the friendly wild-cat's nose;
Be civil to the bass;
And study Nature as she grows,
With sister's opera-glass;
Then write your book, and you can pose
As brother to the ass!'

Thus, with smiles and frowns, with charges and countercharges, with retaliations and recriminations, with exposures, attempted justifications, 'proofs' that were no proofs, and with 'affidavits' to bolster up the impossible, the lovers of Nature fought it out on that line for several summers.

Finally, in June, 1907, more than four years after the pioneer paper by John Burroughs, Theodore Roosevelt, his ire aroused anew by fresh tales of 'glaring mendacity,' unable longer to restrain himself, gave out an interview in 'Every-

body's Magazine' which dealt summarily with the 'nature fakers,' as he dubbed them. The fact that the books of a writer whom he regarded as unscrupulous were put in the hands of school-children especially incensed him. It called for the sharpest kind of rebuke, and he dealt with the offender with his characteristic vigor.

The interview was followed in a later issue of the magazine by a symposium of American naturalists, in which their telling testimony, in addition to the exposure already furnished by Burroughs and Roosevelt, left the nature fakers no ground upon which to stand. Dr. William T. Hornaday, Mr. Edward W. Nelson, Dr. J. A. Allen, Dr. C. Hart Merriam, Mr. Frederick A. Lucas, Mr. Barton W. Evermann, Mr. George W. Shiras, 3d, each in his own field, showed up the utter absurdity of the tales which members of the 'Ancient Order of Ananias' were continuing to foist upon the public. President Roosevelt followed with a short article, one passage of which reads:

> Their [the nature fakers'] most striking stories are not merely distortions of facts, but pure inventions; and not only are they inventions, but they are inventions by men who know so little of the subject concerning which they write, and who to ignorance add such utter recklessness, that they are not even able to distinguish between what is possible — however wildly improbable — and mechanical impossibilities.

Dr. William T. Hornaday, supporting his opinions by concrete examples, declared:

> Whenever a certain writer enters the woods, the most marvelous things begin to happen; there is a four-footed wonder behind every bush, and a miracle every hour; and only God Himself could know the wild creatures as he claims to know them — only the Omnipotent eye could see all the things which he claims to have seen.

Mr. Edward W. Nelson, explorer and scientist, from his extensive knowledge of wild life, asserted:

> No such birds and beasts as appear in these books have been met by any of my many naturalist and hunting friends, nor by myself, in all our wanderings from Arctic to Tropic America; and yet the least of these writers must be able, if taken at his word, to find them on almost any vacation morning.

The absurdity of certain salmon stories was delightfully shown up by Mr. Barton W. Evermann, in charge of the

scientific department of the United States Bureau of Fisheries; while Mr. George W. Shiras, 3d, with his thirty-six years of hunting and photographing the animals in Michigan and Canada, disposed very effectually of an absurd tale of a wolf and a red squirrel in Newfoundland — where, he averred, wolves are practically extinct, and where no squirrels of any kind are to be found! Verily, 'concerning snakes in Ireland, there *are* no snakes in Ireland.'

With the publication of this symposium, the controversy died down; nature-faking became as a tale that is told. The initial spark that kindled so great a matter had, as Dr. Frank M. Chapman fitly said, been the means of making all nature writers in the future draw a line as sharply between natural-history fact and natural-history fiction, as we draw between political history and historical romance.

CHAPTER XXI

WITH ROOSEVELT IN THE YELLOWSTONE

1903

Yellowstone, with all its spasmic geyser-loops ascending to the skies, appearing, disappearing.

WHITMAN

The most interesting thing in that wonderful land was, of course, the President himself.

BURROUGHS

WHEN, in the spring of 1903, President Roosevelt invited Mr. Burroughs to accompany him to the Yellowstone, he wrote that if the Senate would approve, and unless it should prove impossible to dodge the infernal yellow papers, he was counting on seeing elk, deer, sheep, and antelope in the Park, where, he had been told, they were as tame as domestic animals, and that his joy would be great if Mr. Burroughs could go with him. He promised to see that he should endure neither fatigue nor hardship. On finding that he could surely get away, he wrote jubilantly. 'Overjoyed' that Mr. Burroughs would accompany him, he added that, much as he was counting on being in the Yosemite later with John Muir, he should enjoy far more the two weeks in the Yellowstone with Burroughs. He doubted if anywhere in the world there exists such a stretch of wild country in which the wild animals have become so tame, and was looking eagerly forward to their being together and seeing the wild creatures at close quarters.

After the first flush of enthusiasm, the Stay-at-Home confided to his Journal that he was gloomy for all the promised trip with the President; that he would rather stay at Slabsides than be for two or three weeks in the storm-center of his party. And then he noted the advent of two butterflies, and the blooming of hepatica.

In 'Camping and Tramping with Roosevelt,' Mr. Burroughs has described the memorable journey, and recorded his impressions of Roosevelt at close range; but in journal-letters, as the new scenes and experiences unrolled before him, is found much not hinted at in that volume. On April 1st he writes:

You shall have one letter from the White House — a brief one. I reached here last night at six-thirty in a cab. A man came out and asked me if I was Mr. Burroughs, and then conducted me in and up to my room — the most stately room I ever had. The President was out riding. I fussed about my room, and then began changing my collar and cuffs. A servant had rapped a couple of times to see if I wanted anything. Presently, as I stood before the glass putting on my collar there came a louder rap. I said 'Come in,' and in walked the President. He greeted me very cordially, said he was as pleased as Puck to see me. I did not apologize for my appearance — we talked a few moments — he told me the hour of dinner — whom I would meet, etc., and went out, and I went on with my toilet.

At dinner he put me on his right, and an English major on his left. His sister, Mrs. Cole, was the only lady — there were seven of us in all. The President talked so much at table that we did not get up till 9.30.

April 1, 11 a.m. Speeding along from Baltimore toward Harrisburg on a lovely, softly-veiled April day through a green and brown landscape; dandelions spot the grassy banks. I have a room in a comfortable car all to myself. I believe there are a dozen or more in the party. I had the honor of breakfasting alone with the President, and then riding down to the station with him, through the greeting crowds. Mr. Loeb, his secretary, I like much. He is very attentive to me.

Our train is preceded by an engine as a precautionary measure in case any scoundrel has placed explosives on the track. Mr. Loeb tells me that many threatening letters come in every mail to the President, but he never sees them. Mr. Loeb says that it was his suggestion that my going with the President be made public when it was, so as to check the idea that it was to be a hunting trip; and that the news had that effect with the newspapers. The yellow journals so exaggerate his hunting trips, and make so much capital out of them, that the President is greatly annoyed. But I have disarmed the yellow journals, so you see I have been of some use already.

Think of me, the Henpecked, riding down Pennsylvania avenue in a carriage beside the President of the U.S., and treated by him as a friend and equal! When I lived in Washington I saw, a few times, the President in his carriage, but in my wildest dreams I never saw myself beside our chief magistrate. Nearly all the honors I have had in the world have been thrust upon me, and have been a surprise.

The President has a private car. I had lunch with him today — there were, besides myself, his two secretaries, and his physician, Surgeon-General Rixy. I told him of a review of my 'L. V.' ['Literary Values'] in the London Times, which some one had sent me. He asked to see it and reminded me again to fetch it to him after lunch. . . . It was a good notice. This morning at breakfast he recalled something from my 'Spring at the Capital' that I had forgotten.

5 p.m. We have just passed Altoona. It is exciting to see the crowds waiting in the cities we pass through.

[At] Pittsburgh a big crowd gathered at the rear end of the President's car; but he had slipped off ahead of them and gone walking down the long platform in the dim light. I saw him walking up and down there while the politicians and others were waiting for him to appear. Sometimes he quite disappeared in the chaos of red and white lights. I confess I did not like to have him get out of sight. I felt as if I, too, was responsible for his safety. Then I saw him crossing the tracks to a long plank promenade on the other side. He wanted to stretch his legs, I suppose. Two detectives kept not far from him. Presently, to my relief, he came back and was soon enveloped by the crowd, shaking hands right and left.

. . . Roosevelt has a good deal of the boy in him. I suppose it is that that makes him like me. . . .

April 3. We have just done Madison according to program. . . . Gov. La Follette of Wisconsin just told me that meeting me was one of the pleasantest things of his life — that he read me when young, and that he loved me, and he told me so a second time with visible emotion.

Yesterday the Chicagoans put us through our paces. Some of the professors at the University spoke to me in the procession and said my visit was an honor to the University. How strange and absurd it all seems to me — no honor at home, and overwhelmed with it abroad! I am kept near the President in the processions and on the platform where he speaks, and last night at the banquet in C., I sat at his table. It was the finest banquet I ever saw — cost $24 a plate, Secretary Loeb says. I will bring you the menu.

. . . I am really enjoying the trip much more than I expected. . . .

Sioux Falls, Dakota, April 5, 12 m. Here we are according to program, resting over Sunday. All has gone well with us. . . . They are working the President very hard — from eight to ten speeches a day, and a banquet every night. . . . He said to me last night that a man needed the strength of a bull moose to stand it.

He is very considerate of me — says he feels like a hen with one chicken.

Last night after we reached the train at eleven, and after all the fatigue of those twelve speeches, — some of them in the open air to acres of human heads — he came to my room laughing, to see how I stood it.

Yesterday I stood talking to Governor Van Zandt of Minn., near the President, when I dropped one of my gloves. Quick as a flash the President picked it up and handed it to me. A moment later on the platform, from which he was to speak to over ten thousand people, he introduced me to Archbishop Ireland. I am elbowing with governors and senators and mayors. They no doubt think the President a man of queer tastes. As his guest I receive much attention. . . . If

I hang back, they come for me. In his presence my light is invisible to the crowd, but when I am separated from him it shines to a few — usually women who smile and bow and wave to me. Last night at Minneapolis, at the dinner, a man came and sat down by me and said I had probably given more pleasure to more people in that gathering than had Roosevelt.

You should have seen the crowds yesterday in St. Paul and Minneapolis. Those cities seemed inundated with humanity — for miles our carriages could hardly make their way. . . . At one point, as we were moving slowly along, I saw a big banner borne by some girls, with this inscription, 'The John Burroughs Society.' The girls pushed their way through the crowd and timidly and hurriedly handed me a big bouquet. I could only say 'Thank you.'

They were all school-girls with braids down their backs. The President saw it and spoke of it with keen delight. It touched me deeply. After I have told you this, you may read the clipping from the Minneapolis Times which I enclose. There is but one truth in it — that I was the friend of Whitman. I told the President of it at breakfast. He said I must be a presidential candidate to call forth such insinuating attacks. I told him that it was only on his account that I regretted it. The Times is a Democratic paper, and in this instance takes this way to discredit the President by discrediting me. We have been to church this morning and heard a sermon in German.

En route to Fargo, April 6, 2 p.m. These wide Dakota prairies stretch away, a sea of fertile lands on every hand, dotted with groups of farm-buildings, straw-stacks, with here and there a line of trees. Miles of corn-stubble, miles of black newly plowed land, large herds of cattle in the stubble, mirage effects on the far horizon. The sun is shining, the wind is blowing, tumble-weeds go rolling over the prairie. The farm-houses look lonesome as a ship at sea. How monotonous life must be on these farms — the farmer's one task to plough his one hundred or two hundred acres of prairie, sow his seed and harvest his crops. How exposed his place looks! nothing to fend him from the immensity of space, no nook, no corner in which to seek shelter; no individuality in the farms, each one like every other; unending sameness.

At every town we pass, a crowd gathers to see and greet the President — broad, honest, ruddy faces, showing plainly the German element. We have today the two Dakota senators and two M. C. aboard — pretty good fellows, I think. I walked with one of them yesterday several miles on the prairie, and liked him.

Mitchell, 3 p.m. Just stopped fifteen minutes and the President spoke to a crowd of two or three thousand people. Three men spoke to me — one of them, the Post Master, said he wanted to see me more than he did the President. Another spoke approvingly of my March Atlantic paper. . . .

A girl called to see me at the Auditorium in Chicago who wrote me a letter and sent me her picture 8 years ago, as a school-girl. (Her picture is over my bed at SS.)

4 p.m. Another crowd, another speech, at Woonsocket. Still level as the sea stretch the prairie farms, no green things, all the color of dead dry grass; now and then a prairie chicken, meadow larks, and flocks of horned larks. I see the scattered farm buildings standing up on the rim of the world. Knock them off and they would fall into the sky. The few clouds look tired — there are no hills to hold them up.

How strange this trip all seems! When I was in Washington, on my return from Florida, my friends all urged me to call upon the President, but I was really too modest, and now I am his guest and friend on this trip!

Now we are passing a prairie grave-yard. How lonely it looks out there on the open naked bosom of the world! No tree, no shrub, no fence. To the west I see a long blue line that looks like the sea.

Now we are at Alpena and I hear more cheering from the crowd as the President shows himself on the rear-platform of his car.

More and more brown prairies, and less and less plowed land as we go north; more and more stock, less and less grain. The tumble-weeds go rolling over the plain like some nondescript animals fleeing from the train.

. . . Now I see a line of cattle against the horizon — now a wind-mill rises up — then a house and barn, then straw-stacks, then a prairie chicken sails away. . . .

In North Dakota, April 7, 11 a.m. Just left Fargo where we drove through the principal streets and then drove to the opera house where the President spoke. . . . Some women in the crowd recognized me — probably teachers. . . .

5.30 p.m. Just left Bismarck. . . . Here we saw our first Indians — some who were at the Custer slaughter.

Here a mother and her two daughters grasped my hand very eagerly — they knew my books, as did the Governor's private secretary.

Here we see for the first time and cross the Big Muddy (Missouri). It is full of floating ice. Now the character of the scenery changes. How much more interesting the prairie becomes when it is lifted up into smooth rolling hills — it has so much more life and expression. Not a tree or shrub — smooth, flowing, feminine, winsome.

Now, as the sun is setting, I see buttes that look exactly like hay-stacks, round and long. A lone horseman with his dog canters to the top of one of the buttes and looks at our passing train.

This treeless hilly solitude is like that I saw in parts of Alaska.

April 8. Good morning! We are nearing our destination. I see snow-white mountains in the distance — the Rockies. Rolling hills

about us with scattered pine trees. A branch of the Missouri on our right.

I have a cold — the first for two years, but I doubt if it troubles me much — too much eating and no wood to saw, or Slabsides to tramp to. I have just been told by the president of the road that a girl is coming down from Spokane today to shake hands with me at Livingston. There's enthusiasm for you! . . .

How white and cold the mountains look seen through a gap in the near hills. It takes me to Alaska. It is breakfast time. Good bye!

Yellowstone Park, April 10. We reached our destination on time, and came in here to the army post — 5 miles, and stopped with Major Pitcher. . . . The President was as tickled as a boy to get among the soldiers and officers, and leave the noisy political world behind him. . . .

After dinner the Captain put me on his horse and I had my first horseback ride for forty years. I felt very awkward and helpless, but the horse was gentle and brought me safely back. . . .

The altitude here is 6200 feet and I find I tire easily, and that my heart beats faster; but I notice it far less today than on the first day. We are close on the confines of the infernal regions. Nearly all the springs are hot, and the Mammoth Spring is on the hill above the Post. The air is streaked with the smell of sulphur, and there are caves and holes in the rocks filled with deadly carbonic acid gas. Yesterday the Captain and Mrs. Pitcher and I visited the Stygian cave about 400 feet higher up. We saw the remains of dead birds in these grottoes, and near one of them lay a dead pine marten or fisher. We dropped a lighted paper in one of them, and it went out as if it had fallen in water. We found flowers blooming near them. . . .

My girl from Spokane met me at Livingston and brought her sister — two charming young women. They almost got a promise from me to come to Spokane — 500 miles from here. I introduced them to the President and he was delighted with them.

'Wasn't that fine of those girls' he said afterwards. He regretted that I had not introduced to him the two men at Sioux Falls who came from Pipestown, Minn. just to see me, they said. One of them was a mason who works at his trade by day, and reads and studies by night. 'Those are the kind of men I am proud of,' he said, 'who, instead of grumbling at the well-to-do, go to work to better their own condition.'

My ears ring as if I had been taking quinine. I suppose it is the altitude.

At Norris, Yellowstone Park, April 20, 1 p.m. Here we are, all well and happy, having done all of the Park we intend to see, except the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, which we are to see tomorrow. We have come 20 miles today in sleighs from the lower Geyser Basin. . . . I have been as well as the President, and we are both as brown as berries. . . .

I am not coming home as soon as I had planned. I am going to Spokane to visit those girls. . . . Their father is Supt. of the Northern Pacific, and I shall travel free. Then I am going to the ranch of Abe Gill in Northern Montana. Gill is from West Park, and I have known him from a boy. His two sisters from Brooklyn will be with him. . . . I shall see a phase of life and of nature that I have long wanted to see. . . . Maybe I will buy a ranch and become a cow-puncher. . . .

At Mammoth Hot Springs, April 22. We left the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone this morning. . . . We have been at an altitude of 8200 feet, but it ceased to affect me. I am well and hearty, as is the President. Both our noses are peeling. . . .

23. When you were writing, I was on horseback led by a sergeant, going in to join the President in his camp fifteen miles from here. My horse was a big bay, very kind and responsive. We followed a trail that led through all kinds of country — hills, valleys, woods. At one place it kept for one half mile along a steep hillside strewn with boulders, with a roaring stream (the Black Tai Creek) at the foot of it. A misstep and my horse and I might have rolled down 100 feet into it. Then we forded the Yellowstone, the water coming just up to my stirrups; then we had smooth riding along a deep, shut-in valley till we reached the group of tents and the pack train where the President was stopping. There was no snow there and the scene was very beautiful.

The President had gone off all alone in the morning for a little walk. He did not return till 5 p.m., when he owned up to having gone about 18 miles just to creep up on a band of elk and get a near shot at them with his eye. He carried no weapon but his hunting-knife. I enclose his picture as he appeared on his return; and mine, as I appeared on the rocks with my string of fish; for I fished on Easter Sunday. . . .

. . . We got out of the interior just in time, another day and the teams could not have come out, the snow is so deep and soft. . . . The President is very boyish and hilarious at times. I like him more and more.

Mr. Burroughs neglected his Journal during the Yellowstone trip, but made some jottings in a note-book, from which he culled material when writing his book on Roosevelt. The following fragment is worth preserving. Although no name is attached, one need not be told of whom he was writing:

A man who can meet the highest on equal terms, and who does not hold himself above the humblest. A typical, democratic man of the new dispensation — copious, vehement, athletic, richly endowed with all the human attributes — of the open air; stamped by the

great West; a good eater, sleeper, fighter, breeder; cherishing the highest ideals of duty and probity.

On April 25, nearing Butte, Montana, he wrote S. K. T., a friend in Poughkeepsie:

. . . I left the President's party at Livingston. . . . This is a strange-looking country — snow-white peaks shine around the horizon, a vast, rolling tawny green plain between me and them, with tan-colored foot-hills freckled with sage-brush, ranches, cattle, sheep, and farmers plowing. Clear, warm; meadow larks singing; the little towns scattered, new; ugly with big handsome schoolhouses and small churches. Clouds of dust follow the harrow of the farmers. Their homes mostly low, ugly, unhomelike — no trees about them, no gardens. We are on the old trail of Lewis and Clark.

I see low yellow buttercups in blossom. The bluebirds are very blue — no ruddy breasts. Some of the hills dark with spruce or pine. Soon we pass over into the Pacific watershed.

From Spokane, on May 5th, 'Oom John' [1] wrote the following letter to the President:

While you are battling with those crowds and local committees, and doing the work of four or five men, I am up here with these delightful people in this delightful country, playing and picnicking, day in and day out. I never felt so much at home in a strange place in so short a time. . . . The Gilbert family (you saw the two girls at Livingston) have been more than kind to me. They are N.Y. state people to whom life in the West has imparted something of that large sunny buoyant quality which you know so well. Their book-shelves are filled with the best books, and I meet the most delightful and appreciative people in their drawing-room. Your books are all here, and they have all been read and appreciated. . . . Last week we made an excursion of three days through the famous Palouse country to Lewiston, Idaho, and had two days upon those vast smooth dimpled treeless hills for which my feet had so longed.

The air was filled with the songs of the meadow larks, and the ground covered with strange and beautiful wild flowers. We found magpie nests, and the nests of horned larks, and of meadow larks. How I enjoyed it all! A novel country to me where the hills are all smooth and fat as seals, and where a climb of 2000 feet, up what appears to be a mountain-side, brings you to the edge of a vast rolling fertile plain — one of the richest wheat-belts in the world.

The schools here have shown me much attention. . . . My books are much better known and appreciated than I had expected. The people are never tired of hearing me talk about you and our trip into the Park, and I am never tired of talking of these subjects. Indeed, I am beginning to suspect that they think I can talk of little else.

[1] The President gave him this nickname on the trip.

The fact is, the people everywhere are eager to have a near and full view of a public man who has the qualities of heart and head with which you are so richly endowed. I think it quite certain that no president of this generation has touched the real American mind so closely. And you are going to continue to touch it, and to win it, because you are not playing a game in politics, but are seriously doing the work of the nation. Any mistakes you may make, or may have made, will make no difference, because you are not self-seeking, and your motives are transparent.[1]

How I wish Whitman could have witnessed your career! Whitman wrote with his eye upon the West — its larger standards, its greater candor and charity and optimism, its robust manliness, and fervent Americanism; and in you, I think, he would have seen the type of man he sung and predicted, — a man who can meet the highest on equal terms, and does not hold himself above the humblest.

In saying these things to you, Mr. President, I have no purpose of praising you to your face — I am only putting down upon paper my daily thought about you. I hear everywhere the expressions of personal affection for, and solicitude about, you such as I have never before heard expressed toward any president save Lincoln.

You will be interested in a pretty little incident that happened to me yesterday. A winsome little school-girl of ten, whose acquaintance I made one day when I visited the Webster school, where they have organized a J. B. society, came and took me a walk of a couple of miles out on the prairie-like plain that surrounds the city, to see a meadow lark's nest. Her ways and her talk were so delightful as she put her hand in mine and led me to the carefully hidden nest on this broad and beautiful plain. She confided to me that she did so wish that I was her grandfather, and I wished it, too. One of her grandfathers was German, and she has that kind of primitive beauty and wholesomeness which the German blood in this western country often gives to young girls. She showed me her dog, too, which she said she could not help but love almost as much as she did her sister. I shall never forget her.

Squads of school boys, too, come to see me and bring copies of my books for me to write in, and I talk to them about you, and I am sure to tell them that you do not smoke or use tobacco in any form. The State Normal School at Cheney writes me that they have a J. B. Anti-cigarette Society. So you see I have friends, young and old, all around me. But I do not conceal from myself the fact that much of the attention I receive comes from my having been so recently with you and your companions in the Yellowstone Park.

I have made the acquaintance of the pocket-gopher here, and have seen many evening grosbeaks and other unfamiliar birds.

The people in this city are making great reckoning on seeing you. I tell them to remember that when they will be fresh, you will be fagged — how fagged I do not like to think.

[1] 'His Transparency' was a nickname he gave the President who would not brook 'His Excellency' but was delighted with 'His Transparency.'

The seclusion of Slabsides was especially welcome to the wanderer after his far journeyings. Reaching home in late May, he spent the most of the next two months in his retreat, sometimes alone, writing on Animal Life and Instinct, and sometimes with friends who camped there with him.

In early June came a letter from the President, acknowledging a set of Burroughs which Oom John had sent him, and saying that he should soon send a copy of his 'Ranch Life.' 'What a good time we did have in the Yellowstone!' he said, and added that he thought early in July he and Mrs. Roosevelt and Ted could visit him at Slabsides.

Oom John replied:

I am so glad you really think you can come to Slabsides with Mrs. R. and Ted. I can give you a day's rest at least, if you ever need such a thing, with complete immunity from reporters and politicians; and if you should conclude to pass the night with me to hear the whippoorwills, and other night sounds, I can give you a good bed. Mrs. R. could pass the night with Mrs. Burroughs at Riverby.

. . . I had a nice letter from Billy Hofer. He says the deer are now having their young, and are *being taught* by the mothers *to have spots*, and to do all the funny things they have to do in life! . . .

When asking if the week after the Fourth of July would suit for their visit, the President said they could only spend the day there, and added, 'I can't say how I look forward to seeing you.'

'Ted' could not go, after all, but on July 10th, the President and Mrs. Roosevelt went. Their host's account of the visit follows:

Well the day was hot when the President and Mrs. R. came, but we all had a good time. Julian and I met them at the dock at 8.30. The yacht came zig-zagging up the river looking for West Park dock. I waved my coat to the captain, and then they headed for us. Soon the President appeared on deck in a white linen suit and straw hat, and waved and called out, 'How are you, Oom John!' The tide was low, and the little naptha launch in which they came ashore was far below the dock when it came alongside. The President sprang nimbly up and greeted me, and then we reached down and pulled up Mrs. R. A few laboring men from Mr. Seeley's had gathered on one side of the dock. The President went straight over to them. I followed and introduced them all to him. One of them was a veteran of the Civil War, Charlie Burger. The President asked him the name of his regiment, and said, 'You were in the big War, I was in the little War.'

Mrs. R. preferred to walk to Slabsides, so we started off, we four, 'His Transparency' talking vigorously, telling me about Muir and their experiences in the Yosemite. He complained that Muir could not help him with the birds; that he hardly knew the most common ones. And then he told me frankly, rubbing up against me as he spoke, that he found Muir and his books less charming than he found me and my books. I think I could see where the rub was — both are great talkers, and two great talkers, you know, seldom get on well together. Now he finds me an appreciative listener, and that suits him better.

Going along he spoke of some one who had taken him to task for making a mistake as President. 'My dear sir,' he rejoined, 'where you know of one mistake I have made, I know of ten!' Isn't that a Rooseveltian way of disarming a critic? — conceding ten times more than he claims!

We paused here and there to listen to a bird. I pointed out the song of the orchard starling to him, which he did not know, and that of the chat, which he did. Mrs. R. stooped over the dog-bane by the roadside and asked its name.

We went into the station and I wired Ed Platt of the Poughkeepsie Eagle to come up and meet the President (on his permission, of course).

When we came to the short-cut I spoke of it, but advised keeping to the road on Mrs. R's account. She asked how much shorter the short-cut was, and when I told her, chose it, and into the woods we plunged. They both remarked on the beauty and quietness and coolness of the woods. We paused at intervals to breathe and look at the trees, but Mrs. R. gained the top easily (I had told them of the valley of the shadow of the mosquito that we escaped by this route). Soon we were in the road and walking briskly toward Slabsides.

At the bend of the road I spied M.M. [May Morgan] and her friend seated upon the bank, reading. I said, 'Mr. President, here are two girls who want to shake hands with you, one from Missouri, and the other from Mass. He greeted them cordially and introduced them to Mrs. R. M.M. had a book, — he took it from her hand (It was 'Riverby') and said, 'That's all right, and here's just the place to read it. I told him they were here to study the birds, and that I helped them out when they got stuck. M.M. told him she had a ranch in Oklahoma, which seemed to bring up pleasant visions before him.

Soon we were in the land of Slabsides and on the porch of the cabin. It seemed to take them both, and they wiped their faces and looked about with satisfaction. I said, 'Mr. President, I could easily have had a crowd here to receive you.' 'Oh, we like this much better — we have too much of crowds.' 'Yes,' said Mrs. R., 'Oyster Bay is worse than Washington; we have but little peace there; and here is peace and quiet.'

I hurried and got a pail of water from the spring, and how they

did relish it! I think he drank nearly a dozen glasses during his stay of 3 ½ hours. Julian had left us at the station and gone home for his camera, and to tell Mrs. B. to come for Mrs. R. in her phaeton at one o'clock; and to send word to the neighbors to come down to the dock at 2 to meet the President.

Then we talked and cooled ourselves in the breeze on the porch. I wish I could recall all his talk. Soon we were on the subject of my new article and of ——. Then I showed him the drawing of that nest. He was truly amazed and said, 'This throws new light on ——,' and then spoke of him in half pity, half contempt — so easily duped as that! He said, 'He might just as well say that Jenny Wren built herself a log cabin with a bark roof — a miniature Slabsides — as to claim that an oriole did *that*.' He riddled that string-hung nest well; and advised me to dispose of —— in a few words in the article, as outside the pale of reason and common sense. I am going to send him the article to cut and amend.

Soon Julian came with his camera (the President had approved), and a huckleberry-pie from Mrs. B. (The pictures, I am sorry to say, did not come out well — only one of the three being ~~tol~~erable.)

At ten I built a fire in the fire-place, and at eleven put in the potatoes and onions. Julian and Amasa picked some peas, and I cooked them over the oil-stove. Mrs. R. wanted to help shell the peas, and offered to help otherwise.

I had two broilers which I dressed while the President was nosing about my books.[1] He got hold of 'The Play of Animals' and read much in it, and called my attention to several things which I had already considered. . . .

He had a talk with Lyman Abbott the other day about —— and me. Abbott said I had not enough imagination, and —— had too much — I had 5 per cent and —— had 10! Isn't that insight for you? The President said, 'I told him —— had *no* imagination in the true sense at all — that exaggeration and falsifying were not imagination, but yellow journalism.' I think he defended me well.

Mrs. R. went up stairs to see where Ted had slept.

Ed Platt came at 11.30 and at 12 sat down to lunch with us. The President liked him, I could see, and talked freely about politics and state and party secrets. (He would have no secrets of either kind.)

The chicken and potatoes and peas were good, and he ate like a soldier. I had some cool sweet cider, put up last fall, which they both drank and praised; but he got up three or four times and helped himself to water from the pail — and I let him do it.

We had lettuce and celery, too. He told a story of some one who had asked her guest at table if he was hungry. 'No, madam, I am not hungry, I am greedy.' 'That is my case today,' he said.

He told Platt he could pass an examination in my books, and he quoted from them during luncheon.

[1] In telling about this J. B. said that the President went through the volumes on his shelves as one would through a heap of oysters — getting the gist of them in a few minutes.

He said Wall Street was against him, and the party leaders thought it would be difficult to raise a campaign-fund. 'I should like to see a campaign run without a fund,' he said.

Mrs. B. soon appeared, looking her best, and sat in the door while we finished lunch.

At one we were off for Riverby, the President and I and Platt and Hud walking briskly behind the phaeton. They had ice-cream at Riverby, shook hands with some of my neighbors, praised Mrs. B.'s kitchen, sat for a moment in the summer-house and Study, and heartily admired the interior and exterior of Julian's house.

He and I entered Julian's house while Mrs. R. and Mrs. B. were seated in the summer-house. Instantly he ran out and called, 'Edith, Edith, come here! I want you to see this!' He said that was what he liked — something original and American. (We had just been discussing the Vanderbilt Italian palace across the river.)

Then we walked down to the dock where quite a crowd had collected. I introduced every man, woman, and child to him — he would not skip one — not even the kitten a little girl held — and at 2.10 they were off. He waved to us from the deck, and the yacht slowly moved away, as he shouted 'Good bye,' and my day was over.

I am quite a lion here now, and people are driving in to congratulate me.

Mrs. B. was greatly taken with Mrs. R.

I forgot to say that at eleven two reporters came tearing in here. As they appeared at one end of the porch, the President went off the end of the other. I stopped them and told them all there was to tell, and they turned back. Mrs. W——, too, came bouncing in to bring me something; the President looked at her very sternly, but softened when I told him she was my neighbor. She made the salad and prepared the celery, and then went away with the President's autograph, to convince her people, she said, that she had actually met the President.

Writing to Miss Edith Brower of the President's visit, he told of his delight in it, adding:

At night I was nervous and did not sleep well. His visit was like the passing of a great steamer through a quiet, land-locked lake — the waters have not entirely quieted yet. . . .

To the President himself, on July 30th:

The waves which your yacht sent upon the quiet shore of West Park were long in subsiding. It was a great day for us all. I hope I did not make a fool of myself in any way. If I did, it must be set down to my enthusiasm for you. . . .

That Mr. Burroughs was deeply impressed by Roosevelt's friendship for him, which took the special turn it did, was

plain to be seen. He showed a naïve delight in talking of him. To his natural pleasure at being the recipient of such favors from the President of the nation (which he was too genuine to attempt to conceal), was added admiration and affection for the man, which continued and deepened through the years. Some of his friends were at times annoyed that he so often allowed himself to be led into talking of T. R., but his capacity for enthusiasm, and a topic which so appealed to his imagination, made him yield easily to the reiterated request, 'Tell us about your trip with the President.' His own modesty prevented him from seeing, as one friend put it, that he had conferred quite as much honor by accepting T. R.'s invitation, as T. R. had conferred in tendering it. As a rule, he only laughed when others were annoyed to hear him spoken of, or introduced, as 'John Burroughs, the friend of President Roosevelt.'

Proofs of the genuineness of their admiration and affection for each other are many, but one likes especially to remember Roosevelt's affectionate dedication of his 'Outdoor Pastimes of an American Hunter' to 'Dear Oom John,' in which he said, 'It is a good thing for our people that you have lived, and surely no man can wish to have more said of him.'

In his acknowledgment of this dedication, it is not to the President of the United States that 'Oom John' writes, but to the man he loves:

> How can I adequately thank you for the tribute you pay me in that eloquent dedication! It quite touched my heart. I first read it here at Slabsides, sitting by the fire alone, and my eyes were wet, just as they were when, seven or eight years ago, one morning on the beach at Asbury Park I first read of your nomination for Governor by the Republican party. How curiously things are linked together! My affection for you at that time has come back to me in many ways since, and now it has come back again in this open and avowed appreciation of my work.
>
> Unworthy as I know I am of it, I thank you from my heart.
>
> Ever your affectionate
>
> OOM JOHN

That season he wrote much on the subject 'What do Animals Know?' At Twilight Park he sat for his portrait to Mr. Orlando Rouland — the first of several portraits and sketches by that artist. In late August he visited friends in Central New York. September found him by the sea at East

Hampton, sitting to Miss Stephens for his bust; and then a week at Peconic.

A new edition of his works was being prepared that summer. During the vacation, I went through his books, deleting little blemishes, and especially removing a goodly number of 'etc.'s.' When I showed him the number deleted from but one volume, he replied roguishly, 'Why, I'll have all those to use over again, won't I?'

Of Jacob Riis he wrote after meeting him in late September:

I liked him much. He is curiously like the President — the same outspoken, breezy, energetic, overflowing kind of a man. He even looks like Roosevelt — probably unconsciously imitates him. I liked his wife, too. She was especially kind, hearty, and entertaining.

In the winter solitude at Riverby his reminiscent tendencies again found him out and sometimes crept into his letters, as in one of December 3d:

. . . When a boy of ten or twelve I conceived a love for a boy of five or six, the fragrance of which still lingers in my heart. He was the son of a cousin of mine who came to our house one summer and stayed some weeks. Her boy, Harvey, and I clove to each other at once. He was wonderfully beautiful, and we were inseparable. To this day the experience stands out as something unique in my life. How I loved him! a kind of nimbus surrounds those days. I carried him much in my arms. Once, as he stood at the head of the stairs in the wood-house, and I, standing on the steps below him, turned to take him in my arms, he gave a little spring, and I went over backward down the stairs with him in my arms. He was badly hurt on the head, but I was uninjured. I pined for him for weeks and months after he was gone, and for years could not think of him without a throb. I think it early revealed in me a capacity for comradeship of which you have seen some proof in my later life. . . . He is now a doctor in San Francisco. If I ever go there I shall see him.

Mrs. B. goes to Poughkeepsie today to look up a boarding-place, and Julian and Emily are talking of Cambridge. I may go with them. . . . If it gets milder, I may stay at Slabsides.

Later in the month:

Just here Julian and Edith Trowbridge came in for my Slabsides key. Edith is a fine girl and an excellent violinist. Her violin alarmed Elizabeth [his granddaughter] greatly. They are going to try it on her again today. I doubt if animals, or man at the animal stage, have any appreciation of harmonious sounds, or of perfumes. How I wish you were here to hear Edith play! Her violin was made in 1700 and something. Such depth and richness of tone as it has!

I have just finished a letter to the President in which, after I told him what pleasure I had had this fall in his hunting books, I told him how I liked his recent Panama hunt; and that he had bagged the game almost before we knew what had happened; and that I did not think a brigandish government like Columbia, if it did call itself a republic, should be allowed to 'hold up' the United States and thus block a great world enterprise. I wonder what he will think of my presumption.

[Journal] December 31. The last day of 1903. An eventful year to me — pleasure and pain. Health has been above the average; weigh 168. Have written more, and gadded about more, than in many years. Many new friends — still my heart is with the old ones.

CHAPTER XXII

AS THE YEARS GO BY

1904–1906

On all his sad and restless moods
The patient peace of Nature stole;
The quiet of the fields and woods
Sank deep into his soul.

WORDSWORTH

THE beginning of the new year found Mr. Burroughs dividing his time between a boarding-house in Poughkeepsie, with his wife, and his Study at Riverby, often sleeping in his Study and cooking over the fireplace there. He was still writing on animal life and instinct, and, quite apart from the closer tie, was finding his infant granddaughter an interesting object merely as the young of the human species:

The baby is as serene as ever; but in the large station at Albany she was afraid. She looked up at the lofty ceiling, and about the huge cavernous room, and began to cry, so that her mother had to take her to a small side room.

Later:

Elizabeth has got so she giggles out-loud at my antics and grimaces.

Having promised to write an Introduction to the Nature Library, he was, as usual with any set task, approaching it as a lamb to the slaughter:

I am working away and think I have material for two short articles, but not the Introduction. It is like fishing — I have caught two, but not yet the one I am after. I shall get him soon, I think — he has nibbled several times.

. . . My mind got off on the old trail of Animal Life and Instinct and has followed it into some new territory. I think a magazine article or two will result. It seems as if I must run this subject into a hole somewhere before I can give it up. . . .

My old friend at Raven's Nest is dead. . . . Dear old soul! I fancy he was game to the last. He had many sterling qualities, but reticence was not one of them. . . .

In February, writing that his publishers had doubled his annuity, making it $1500, he said whimsically, 'The worry

of my life now will be what to do with the money! I have no genius for spending money.'

1. Man-not-afraid-of-Company

The year proved one of many short flittings, with much company at Slabsides. Often friends and groups of friends who came are named in the Journal — Owen Johnson, Clifton Johnson, Florence Wilkinson, the Vanamees, the Van Slykes, Rudolf Binder; again, merely the jotting, 'Much company at Slabsides.' In June he pleads, 'What shall I do to check this flood of company? I find it so hard to say "no" — quite impossible.' To Miss Edith Brower, who named him 'Man-not-afraid-of-Company,' he wrote:

> Your Indian name pleases me greatly. It gave me the first laugh I have had in a long time. Give it to me in the aboriginal tongue and I will put it on my coat of arms.

He chronicles having visited Walter H. Page, and seeing 'The Pit' with him, of which he said, 'A strong play in parts, and some good acting'; he mentions dining with Ruth McEnery Stuart, Hamlin Garland, and Mary E. Burt; attending the Camp Fire Club dinner, where he spoke on 'Animal Intelligence,' and was quite out of conceit with himself:

> I did not speak well. I did not feel in sympathy with those two hundred smoking men who wanted to be amused. I labored, I hesitated, I was embarrassed, and cursed myself for being there. I shall never do it again. I shall not go to the Yale Club dinner. I shall stick to the obscurity of Slabsides. I do not seem to be able to speak as well as I did ten years ago.

He did stick to Slabsides and Riverby for a time, and in March, while boiling sap, finished two papers for 'Harper's' — 'Some Natural History Doubts and Conclusions,' and 'Nature's Ways.' After having declined an LL.D. from the University of Wisconsin, he wrote:

> So unscholarly a man as I am is not entitled to that degree. Mrs. Burroughs half-jocosely said, 'They might as well confer the degree on the old cat.' How shall a man be a hero in his own family?

In April he reluctantly attended the dinner of the Institute of Arts and Letters, in New York, where, he said, the Amer-

ican Academy was to be hatched. He notes meeting Stedman, Matthews, Mabie, Lounsbury, Royce, Saint-Gaudens, and others.

At Mount Holyoke in May, he walked the woods with ninety girl students, teaching them the birds. While there he lunched with Higginson and heard him lecture — 'elegant and pleasing, but slight.' After visiting Misses Jordan and Peck at Smith College, he hurried back home to welcome the Dana Historical Society from Albany, to attend Class Day at Vassar, and to make ready for the marriage of Miss Minnie Dwight and Mr. Orlando Rouland at Slabsides.

Mr. Burroughs often lent his cabin for the summer months. In July of that year, Dr. John Douglas Johnson and other friends occupied it, during a fortnight of which I joined them. Mr. Burroughs spent much time with us there. It was then that he gave me the data about his ancestry which is incorporated in 'Our Friend John Burroughs.' The unbound sheets for the limited (750) autograph edition of his works came for his signature at that time. All of us took turns in blotting as he signed them.

None of us will forget the cleaning and furbishing given the little cabin the day Mrs. Burroughs came to dinner; for the glimpses of the spick and spanness of everything around Riverby had made us regard with some anxiety her scrutiny of our housekeeping. The dinner and the tidy cabin quite won her approval, although some days later when she entertained us at Riverby, and we saw the spotlessness of her kitchen floor, we almost quaked anew at having risked comparison with the floor at Slabsides.

The friends and strangers who came to call and to picnic at the cabin during our sojourn were doubtless disappointed to find the Hermit sharing his solitude with a family of seven. One morning an unwonted sound drew us to the door. Winding down the wood-road came a cavalcade that made the small boys, and the adults, too, open wide their eyes. It was Judge Alton B. Parker with friends who had ridden over from Esopus to see Neighbor Burroughs. The charm of manner of the Presidential candidate was such that one of the small boys, aged five, hitherto a stanch supporter of Roosevelt, transferred his allegiance to the Democratic candidate.

Unforgettable were those days for young and old — climb-

ing Julian's Rock, from which one overlooks four States, going to Phœbe's Hall, to Sunset Rock, to the Long Level; gathering water-lilies on the Shattega, and swimming in Black Pool. Mr. Burroughs made cat-tail penholders for the elders, and basswood whistles for the youngsters. On rainy days he read aloud from Whitman, Matthew Arnold, and Wordsworth. One evening he danced the 'juba' on the veranda, as he and Reub Scudder had danced it in their teens. He amused the children with 'The Three Jovial Welshmen,' adding impromptu variations suggested by daily experiences at the cabin. Sometimes around the fire we had a contest of nonsense rhymes. His doggerel about his dogs delighted the boys beyond measure.

An episode of one rainy evening comes to mind: the party grouped about the fire; the light flickering on the satiny yellow birch partition and stairway, and on the white hair of Mr. Burroughs as, seated in his big chair, he was being taught a Sunday-school piece by a boy of five. The little teacher stood on the stair-landing, solemnly and slowly repeating, line for line, his little piece, which Mr. Burroughs as solemnly and slowly repeated after him, making mistakes, just to hear the child's earnest corrections. The young one's voice — eager, animated — corrected and gave instructions; the elder's, dreamy and slow, repeated the lines:

In the golden sunshine of the summer days
Let God's happy childun songs of gladness waise.
Up in the wustlin' twee-tops (now Mr. Burrs, put up your finner) — birds so gaily sing (now put *down* your finner, Mr. Burrs),
Let us all be joyful — joyful in our King!

Later that season, while camping at Snyder Hollow (Woodland Valley) at 'Camp Betty,' with son and family, he wrote:

It is a lovely spot in a glade beside the limpid stream. . . . The great wooded mountains — Panther, Wittenberg, Slide, Cross — stand around so near that you can hear them purr. . . . There are bears in the fall and winter, and trout all summer. Can't you and Dr. Ashley run up here and see it? A stay here a month each season would lengthen the lives of all of us. . . . What a spot for a sanitarium! . . . On the spot where Myron and I camped many years ago (*see* 'Heart of the Southern Catskills' ['Riverby']), I found a dozen strawberries!

Writing from East River, Connecticut, in August:

I am still lotus-eating here by the sea. I hear the slow pulsing of the waves as I write. The house is within a few feet of the surf and I find the place singularly restful. I could not sit down in this way in a strange place in the country and not be bored after a day or two, but the sea never tires me. The novelty of it, and the ceaseless motion hold me. Even the monotony of it plays a part in its fascination. . . .

Mr. Burroughs's reactions to an engrossing current event may be seen in his Journal, September 6th:

The thought that has quickened my pulse all summer is the thought of the Japs. When I begin to read the morning paper my heart hits it up from 70 or 72 to 85. What a wonderful people! May they break the last bone in the body of the Russian bear!

In late September he joined a house-party at the Vanamees in Atlantic City; the daily surf-bathing, running on the sun-drenched sand, and reading Whitman there by the sounding sea, followed by a visit to Whitman's tomb, made memorable those autumn days.

A happy encounter awaited him at his old home:

[Journal.] Met Sandy Smith today after a separation of forty-five years. I go over to Tom's at 9. See Sandy slowly walking up the road in his shirt sleeves. He sees me and turns about. His beard is longer, but not so white as mine. His eyes fill with tears as he clasps my hands. I should not have known him had I met him in a strange place. . . . He is slower than I am; eye sight not so good as mine. . . . We part as if we might meet again soon, but my thought is that we are parting for the last time.

In his poem 'A Call to the Mountains' Mr. Gilder sent John o' Birds an invitation difficult to withstand, as this letter shows:

You wrote me the jolliest letter and invitation I ever had. Your verses swooped down upon me like a veritable flock of birds, chippering and singing about my ears. Had I not been tied here I should have been off for Four Brooks Farm at once. For a week I have been a martyr in the sitter's chair — a young man is etching me, and a woman is making a bust of me. I have been sitting four and five hours a day, and am getting very tired of it. . . .

I would come to you this week, but I have agreed to be at home to Bliss Perry, who is going to write the life of Whitman for the American Men of Letters series, and who wants to talk Whitman with me. . . .

The bust of which he wrote was never exhibited, except in clay.

From the birthplace of Whitman he writes in October:

I am sitting here in an old farm-house where Walt dined the last time he visited his birthplace, a few years before his death, my back to an open fire in a huge chimney, while the rain is pouring without, and while a pleasant-faced woman is seated on a sofa a few feet away, trying to paint me. . . .

It all came about in this wise: On Monday there came into Mrs. [Adelaide] Johnson's studio a friend of hers, Mrs. C——, who had been making trips to this place to paint scenes about Whitman's homestead. She was going again on Tuesday and invited me to accompany her. . . . She is an agreeable person and a great lover of Whitman. She found Whitman a few years ago as a savior . . . he put new courage and hope in her, and now she is hovering about the place of his birth. . . .

At Huntington we poked about the old cemetery; found no Whitmans, but lots of Scudders and Goulds — all names of my native town — whose ancestors had come from L.I.

We went into the office of the *Long Islander*, but the young men could not tell us much about Whitman's connection with that paper, except that he had printed it in a barn not now standing. Then we got a man to drive us to West Hills — two and one half miles to the south. We went first to the W.'s birthplace — a lonely farm-house fast going to ruin. It is occupied by a farmer, and inside and out is untidy. The old kitchen with its oaken beams was full of rubbish. . . . It was all sad and depressing. From there we drove to this farm-house . . . part of the house over a hundred years old. . . . We went to the school-house where Whitman taught about the year I was born. Standing there in the dim light, I read from 'Leaves of Grass' to them. . . . Today I have been reading Whitman aloud while Mrs. C. tries to paint me. She paints flowers beautifully, but I doubt if she can paint a man.

Quite other experiences are recorded in another letter:

On Monday Mrs. Robbins came for me and drove me through the park and then along Riverside, then back to Mr. [Eugene] Heffley's studio, and then to a restaurant for dinner — we three, a fine dinner with sparkling Moselle wine — quite like champagne. Mrs. R. was jolly and kind, and could not do enough for us. Yesterday I went with her to a mind-reader's; she read my psychology pretty well. It was all vague and mystical; but she either knew me, or else got on to it at once. Some of it was very beautiful and flattering. . . . She spoke of Mrs. B., and of the 'pappoose that loved me so'; of a man near me who gave me much thought and trouble; and of some older person who had heart trouble, and whom I would outlive. She told of a new influence that would come, or had come — I could not

make out the tense — into my life, and that would be very fruitful for twenty years. She saw my life as a rose dropping its petals, one by one, and then, near the end, saw the new bud. Many things she said were beautiful and suggestive, and, I hope, prophetic. Often tears oozed from under her eyelashes. She is a large, middle-aged Southern woman.

My book ['Far and Near'] will not be out till the 29th, and the new edition of all my books in November. . . .

Later, from Slabsides:

My Study [at Riverby] is torn up [new chimney, floors, bookshelves] so I have come here to write. . . . Mr. Perry came and we had a delightful day. I like him very much, so would you. Our talk about Whitman was quite general. . . . Mr. Miller is a very likable fellow with soft blue eyes — an Iowa boy; he told me his whole life had been shaped by my books. We had a fine dinner here of roast duck. . . . He wants me to write up my vineyard experiences for his paper [Country Life]. I may do it. . . .

I am growing fat on the experiences of the Japs. . . . I wish you were here to share my baked potato and my crisp salad. More company on Wednesday and Saturday, and more begging to come. What a day for nutting! I am sure you want to go. Mrs. B. was pleased with your letter. So was I.

November found him writing on protective coloration, but interrupting himself to go to New York to dine with Mr. John Morley. The dinner caused him some perturbation beforehand, for, as usual, he had left his evening clothes at home, then, as the time approached, began to wish he had brought them. Being a guest of Dr. Johnson at the time, he was fitted out by the Doctor, as the next excerpt shows:

I wore John's clothes and looked as much like a waiter as the rest of them. Mr. Carnegie was ill. Mr. Gilder took his place at the table, and called up the speakers. (I was not one of them.)

Morley is a fine-looking man — a large noble head, fresh color, beardless face — a man without vanity or affectation. I liked him. He said he was reading my book — the last one, probably. My seat was opposite him, between President Hadley of Yale and President Butler of Columbia. They were each flanked by a college president — Cornell and N.Y. University. Ex-Secretary Root was seated beside Morley. He came and spoke to me after dinner. I like him much — an able and sincere man.

Writing at this time to Mr. Charles E. Benton, whose 'Emotions Experienced in Battle' had recently come out in the 'New England Magazine,' he spoke of his deep interest in

the paper, adding: 'I better understand now why soldiers do not all run away in time of battle. I heard the President say one wanted to — "but you just can't."'

He gives this picture of his winter days:

I cut wood and walk to Slabsides, and in the evening sit here [in his Study at Riverby] alone by my open fire and read; but I am glad when the hour of sleep comes. I need company and entertainment in the evening, and to have the ashes brushed from the coals. These ashes, I suspect, will accumulate more and more as time goes on. That is what it is to grow old and have the embers buried deeper and deeper beneath the ashes, till they go out entirely.

His interest in current events is glimpsed in this excerpt from a letter to Miss Edith Brower:

The Japs have been my chief consolation the past summer and fall, and are yet. It quickens my pulse to think of them. They make me want to be a pagan. I read the papers only for the war news, and I want one night and morning. I hate the Russian government and all that it stands for as I hate few other things; and its overthrow would delight me beyond measure. I am a man of peace myself, but I glory in the Japs and in their cause.

As the year drew to a close, he finished two essays, 'Gay Plumes and Dull' ('Leaf and Tendril') and 'A Beaver's Reason' ('Ways of Nature'). In a December letter he comments concerning one of his many visitors.

A young man from Portland, Oregon, took part of my day yesterday — a bird enthusiast — with a pile of photographs to show me, very interesting, but I hated to have the thread of my thought snapped. Still I feel that I ought not to deny myself to such young fellows — often my own intellectual children. This young man will be heard from in the magazines.[1]

But I hardly know what to think of this strenuous pursuit of the birds — following them into the tops of the tallest trees with the camera, and wresting every secret of their lives from them. It is in keeping with the terrible urge and stress of the race and times, but I doubt if the real bird that you and I love does not escape them after all. To lay bare everything in nature with the camera — is it really worth while?

Less and less of his subjective life is now found in the Journal, but more in his letters. More and more persons find their way to Slabsides, and he makes more frequent flittings from home.

[1] William L. Finley.

Early in January he writes jubilantly to Miss Brower:

And Port Arthur has fallen! Thank God! Now if the whole infernal Russian government should be engulfed in a popular uprising, and never be seen or heard of again, the whole world would be the gainer. From this day I am going on a diet of rice and dried fish, in hopes of getting some of the vim and virtue of the Japs in me. I want to hug every Jap I see in the streets. . . .

He is keeping house those winter days in his Bark Study at Riverby.

I sit here evenings and read Carlyle's letters written when I was a child at my mother's knee, or before I was born. . . . Nearly all his letters are to his own people. My letters home were never preserved. How I should like to see them — just for the sake of the old days.[1]

Julian thinks my piece on animal coloration is chaotic. He gave me a regular Harvard class-room lecture on the subject, which made quite an impression. More order and system in the parts, he thinks, would make it much more effective. I must look it over again with this in mind. No one suggested the new title ['Gay Plumes and Dull'] to me. It came to me one morning when I woke at two. I have a wakeful hour then and many things pop into my head.

Jan. 29. Lyman Abbott preached at Vassar, and Mrs. B. wanted me to go out there to hear him. He is clear-headed and broad-minded, but not a moving preacher.

In the afternoon I went up to West Park to see my new granddaughter, and take the little cheat to task for not being a boy. She came Thursday morning, without nurse or doctor, and weighed eleven pounds.

Feb. 6. Your letter and the copy of 'A Beaver's Reason' came on Saturday. . . . How you did riddle one of my pages! I never in my life had the very ground so shot from under me. Where I stood was a hole in the ground. Well, it is all news to me. Only the other day I was reading in one of my doctor books[2] the very thing I state about prenatal markings. I am not entirely convinced yet. A case occurred at Hobart a few years ago which I must enquire more about. I suppose it was the imagination of the mother that did the work. . . . Did not the Greeks aim to keep beautiful statues before their gestating women? But I never before knew that such things happen to the lower animals, too.[3] . . . I think Mrs. B. rather enjoyed my discom-

[1] He preserved all the letters from his kin throughout the years, many hundreds of them — yet scarcely a dozen of his to them can be found! Most of his letters to his wife and son were preserved.

[2] Books he studied in 1860!

[3] These comments refer to strictures and criticisms concerning the surprising credence he had shown as to emotional conditions in gestating women causing mother's marks, monstrosities, etc.

fiture. . . . I am rewriting the paper and am conceding an amount of free intelligence to animals over and above instinct. . . .

2. In Bermuda

In mid-February, Mr. and Mrs. Burroughs sailed for Bermuda. His impressions of 'the pretty little island, a kind of toy England,' are found in his journal-letters:

Feb. 12. All went well till this afternoon when the white arms out in the breakers began to toss. By night the sea nymphs were showing their whole white bodies, and I wanted to spank them. . . . Then I took to my berth. Mrs. B gave in Sunday morning. . . .

Hamilton has a foreign look. I have just lunched with the U.S. Consul, Green. . . . Bermuda presents a succession of low rounded hills thinly clad with dark cedars. . . . The sea is on all sides caught and tangled by the land — deep bays and arms and straits all studded with islands . . . and, oh, the azure waters! . . . The cedars are like our junipers, only larger and more thrifty and fluent-looking — no native deciduous trees at all. Roads, superb, like all English roads. . . .

This afternoon we took a two hours' drive with Miss [Minna] Smith — a bright, interesting, wholesome woman, lately on the Boston Transcript. . . . Everything is neat and compact and orderly here. . . . Cut into these hills, and they look like cheese — a cream-colored sandstone, so soft they saw it into blocks.

16. I will slip a note into Mrs. B's envelope. She has had an acute attack of rheumatism. . . . I want a title for a short paper — A Walker's Wallet, Loose Leaves, Gleanings, or what?[1]

18. Today I had my first real walk — seven miles — on my right hand, shone the painted ocean — a great horizon-filling morning glory — in splendor beyond words. How I exulted in it! The sun shone brightly, the road was round and hard and smooth, the familiar birds called and whistled; the low houses shone like white tents amid the cedars; my spirits mounted as I walked; and for the first time in Bermuda I was happy. I soon left my sea legs behind me and got hold of my own Slabsides transfers; slung my coat over my shoulder, and scorned the wheelmen and carriage riders who met or passed me. Near Hamilton I was overtaken by a man (E. J. Loomis), who had walked with Thoreau and Emerson and Channing, and with whom I had walked in Washington forty years ago. . . .

21. Near Mrs. Stuart's cottage is where Tom Moore lived for four months in 1804. . . . The little ground-dove is common here. It looks so pretty walking hurriedly about the lawn, moving its head rapidly

[1] He called it 'Gathered by the Way.'

— a toy dove — one would like to have it snuggle in the hollow of his hand. The sea is a transparent azure, of unearthly purity. It suggests some kind of sublimated water — a denser sky. . . .

24. I am not in a sprightly mood and go about half dreaming, half observing. I suppose my old enthusiasm for new scenes and a new nature is gone past recall. I doubt if I ever again seek a foreign shore.

25. Go to a picnic on Castle Island . . . the oldest fortifications in Bermuda — 1600 and something. . . . The prettiest thing was the tropic bird — a slender graceful sea-bird like a gull, with a long plume to its tail that trails behind it like a string. The bird is snow white, but when it comes up over this blue-green sea, it takes on the most delicate green tint. At Tuckerstown we loitered upon the pink sand and sat beneath the arches of gray rock. . . .

26. At the Devil's Hole I saw angel-fish (not fallen angels) — the most marvellously beautiful creature I ever looked upon — such grace of form, and such color — a living embodiment of these matchless seas!

March 3. Off Sandy Hook at ten-thirty. Both of us much better. Last half of the voyage as smooth as the Hudson.

3. A Real and Sham Hermit

That our Hermit was both a real and a sham hermit is clearly proved by the promptness with which he fled to his woodland refuge after the many brief minglings with his kind — fled to find himself: 'It is so easy,' he said, 'to get lost in the world.'

Shortly after their return from Bermuda, while they were staying in Poughkeepsie, Mr. Burroughs came over from Riverby one night bringing the little round cakes of maple sugar he had made that day. 'You never saw sugar as white as that, nor as sweet,' he said challengingly. 'This has March sunshine in it, and the dimpling, sparkling river, the robin's laugh, and the calls of the sparrows — I boiled them all down in these little cakes.'

The travelers were full of their recent experiences in Bermuda. Mrs. Burroughs had found little but pain and discomfort in the trip, but while he, too, had found these, the memory of them had faded, and he was seeing it all through the enchanting veil in which the past enveloped everything for him. As he talked of 'the pretty little island,' he waxed en-

thusiastic — 'so small you could hold it in the hollow of your hand.'

'Why, John, you know better than that!' exclaimed Mrs. Burroughs, who was nothing if not literal.

'Well, — not *your* hand, my dear, of course, but mine,' and he held out his hand, stretching it to its utmost, his comical look, and the compliment, eliciting a half-smile and a mollified 'Hump!' from his spouse.

'Love and War Among the Bluebirds' (Country Calendar) was a part of his April work. In his mid-April Journal is a recurrence of the sadness so frequently met in the earlier records:

> I seem to feel older this spring than ever before. Is this old age — this lassitude, this want of strength, this fatigue in back and limbs, this constant retrospection?
>
> Burn over Mr. Allen's field this afternoon and enjoy it much. If the world is ever to be burned up, I want to be allowed to set the fire.

Prominent among the events of the spring schedule were: a jaunt to Mt. Holyoke, and bird-nesting with the students; trouting with the Canfields in the Willowemoc and the Mongaup; and a visit to Twilight Park with Mary Mapes Dodge.

A letter to the novelist Miss Edith Ricket follows:

> . . . You make me want to come to England again. If it were not for that dreadful sea I should surely come. I do not outgrow my susceptibility to seasickness. . . . It follows me to the land and is very annoying. . . .
>
> I had hoped I should see Greece before I died, but I doubt if I do. I wanted so much to look into the face of old Mother Nature in that land.
>
> . . . You spoke of Hudson. The only book of his I know is his 'Naturalist in La Plata,' and this contains so many big stories that I have come to doubt his veracity as an observer. . . .

At this period he was saying 'no' less and less to invitations. The midsummer was marked by numerous jaunts: in the Catskills with the Whiteheads at the Byrdcliffe Art Colony near Woodstock, where he sat for his portrait to Miss Mathilde de Cordoba; visiting the Dellenbaughs at Cragsmoor, the Burnhams at Sutton Island, the Roulands at Seal Harbor, and distant relatives in Rhode Island — to name a few. Verily, the friends he sought were seeking him.

To a relative somewhat remote by the tie of blood, but near of kin through other ties, he wrote from Ridgefield, Connecticut, in August. His letter gives a glimpse of another, and a comparatively new, friendship which had had its inception the preceding year, a bone of contention, which the new friends now peaceably gnawed together, being the tie that bound them:

DEAR LORA,

All went well with me after I left you. I reached Cos Cob on time. Seton was there waiting for me. A drive of a mile brought us to his house — a large, original picturesque-looking building on the edge of an open glade in the woods, — a very artistic and boldly original house. . . . We spent the time walking, rowing on the lake, and loafing about. I got a good impression of Seton and his wife, except that I do not like quite so much rich man's style. His way of loving nature is not mine, but doubtless it is just as genuine.

I came here Saturday and have had a fine time with these old, old friends [the R. U. Johnsons]. Yesterday I played my first game of golf and beat one old player, and tied another. You may hear of me as a champion golf player!

[Journal] . . . Gilder one of the best souls in the world, like a child in many ways, unselfish, unworldly, generous, devoted to any and every good cause; does not spare himself; flutters about too much — like a bird, from branch to branch — lacks continuity and concentration of effort, yet carries out what he undertakes; lacks system and organization in his life, as seems to me. A real poet — fluid, lyrical, with fine deep touches now and then — the nearest to Keats of all our singers.

We dine with Joseph Choate one day. Choate a fine, clear-cut, hawk-eyed man — heard no great wit or wisdom fall from his lips.

With the publication that autumn of 'Ways of Nature,' Mr. Burroughs hoped he was done writing on the topics which had held him since 1903, but another essay, 'Human Traits in the Animals,' and still other allied essays, written about that time, showed he was not.

A significant entry, November 8, speaks of the first dinner of the American Academy of Arts and Letters:

Dinner not a success — only nine members present. Mark Twain very diverting, as he always is.[1]

[1] The dinner may not have been a success, but to-day the Venetian Renaissance home of the Academy is a solid reality, though at that time it existed only in the minds of a few indefatigable idealists.

Of the Mark Twain seventieth birthday dinner, in December, he said:

The dinner was a fine affair, and I tried to behave myself — drank only two or three glasses of champagne. I did not get Miss [Florence] Wilkinson. I got Louise Chandler Moulton . . . and I could not recall one of her poems. But in front of me was sweet and pretty Abby McGuire Roach, and she helped out greatly. . . . She introduced me to Mrs. Martin — the 'Emmy Lou' woman. . . . On my left sat Mrs. Rogers . . . a large, soft, downy kind of woman. . . . Her husband sat at Mark Twain's table. . . . How Mark Twain can accept favors from him is a mystery.

I had been in the room but a few minutes when Kate Douglas Riggs asked to be introduced to me. . . . She was one of the speakers, and she sparkled. Agnes Repplier spoke — like her writing — bloodless. Howells' speech and poem were the best, then Gilder's, then Mabie's. Cable and Carnegie I did not care for, and Irving Bacheller was a bore. . . .

Mark Twain was of course amusing, but most of what he said, spoken by anyone else, would have sounded flat and absurd. Amélie Rives looks mighty well. So does Emily Post. . . . I met 'Mr. Dooley' and liked him much. . . .

We all had our pictures taken in that strange new Holland light that kills all the pinks and reds, and make you look like an old Pompeian bronze. Our lips were black, and our faces showed us all with Addison's disease. . . . We were all presented with a small plaster cast of Mark Twain — not very good.

Later in the month:

I am reading Darwin's 'Voyage of a Naturalist' which I first read over forty years ago. . . . He was the dearest, humblest, most modest man that ever lived, and yet one of the broadest and deepest. 'Dear Darwin,' I say over and over to myself as I read his books and his letters. I think I should have loved him as I did Whitman. Greatness and humility, how often they are inseparable! I walked over his newly-made tomb in Westminster Abbey in 1882. How that name moved me as I saw it there under my feet!

Dec. 19. . . . I sent the Yellowstone paper [1] to the President on Saturday, and it comes back this morning. He objects to the Albany story, so that is stricken out. . . . He says: 'The only fault I have to find with it, my dear fellow, is that you look upon me through glasses altogether too rose-colored. But I cannot say I am as sorry for the fault as I ought to be.'

I am at work on my philosophy piece for the Cosmopolitan — have it about two-thirds done. . . .

Seton's 'Animal Heroes' I am pleased with, so far. He easily

[1] 'Camping with President Roosevelt' (*Atlantic Monthly*, later incorporated in *Camping and Tramping with Roosevelt*).

throws all other animal story writers in the shade. . . . See what a nice letter I had from Mrs. Lanier. I wrote her I could not come now.

[Journal] December 27. A fine Indian summer day, mild, hazy, tranquil. Finish my Outlook Upon Life. Walk to Slabsides. A fine spectacle in the western skies these nights — Saturn and Mars almost shaking hands. Now Mars is soaring above and away from Saturn.

The essay of which he speaks here, 'What Life Means to Me,' probably brought him more responses from readers than any other single thing he ever wrote, except 'Waiting.' It was printed in the 'Cosmopolitan,' April, 1906, and, somewhat changed and expanded, was published as 'An Outlook Upon Life' ('Leaf and Tendril').

To Roosevelt in the early part of the new year he wrote:

Your message to Congress on the Garfield report put an inch of fat on my ribs. If you can put a ring in the nose of that gigantic Hog, the Standard Oil Company, you will make life more worth living to every honest man. Neither my boy nor I will use their oil. If only a million families would take this stand!

Presently he is flocking with birds not of a feather, at a reception at the Pen and Brush Club, and sitting for his bust to the sculptor Mr. Hermon McNeil.

From the beginning of the new century John Burroughs suffered many things of many artists, and perhaps some of them suffered likewise from him. It seemed impossible to him to say 'no' to the importunities of painters, sculptors, and etchers, any more than to photographers. Each artist pleaded that to paint or model him, besides being such a joy, would be a feather in his cap — secure him important commissions, and so on. What could he do but consent — only to chafe at the martyrdom of posing just as the work would get well under way. Declaring vehemently that he would 'never be caught that way again,' he yielded again and again to persuasion.

In January he began revising his poems, preparatory to publishing them in a book. One of his letters at this time suggests that he wrote poetry as Milton said he wrote controversial prose, — with his left hand:

Your letter greatly pleased and amused me. Your frisky rhyme

gently shook my diaphragm. . . . On Sunday and Monday I worked over the poems.

I thought I had them done when I discovered that I had often repeated myself in the various spring poems. I twice had the sparrow singing on the wall, twice the meadow lark showed 'flashing quill'; twice the cattle fretted in their stalls, and twice, 'the maple trees their fringe unfold.' I have got rid of one of the sparrows, one of the meadow larks, and have silenced half the cattle in their stalls, and I have hopes of cutting one of those maple trees today. I got that 'goblet' out of the tide, and put a grayling there, which seems more in place. That 'reedy jingle' of the grackle I have changed to a 'strident jingle.'

Of a prospective visit to Washington he wrote that he dreaded being 'put through' — 'My gait is so much slower than that eager, hurrying crowd.' Furthermore, an artist friend was importuning him to urge the President to sit for his portrait, and he was between two fires — loath to refuse the favor to his friend, and loath to make a nuisance of himself with the President.

From the Cosmos Club in Washington he wrote in February:

I have been walking about the old scenes this morning with tears in my heart, if not in my eyes. I have looked long and long at the window where Walt used to sit and look out over the Potomac to the Virginia hills, and where I sat and talked, or was silent, with him forty years ago. . . . I have been back to my old office and met five or six persons who were there with me. . . . I went into the vault I used to keep with its fifty million of bank notes. How like a dream it all seems to me here!

3 p.m. I am just back from the lunch. The President and Mrs. Roosevelt were very cordial. Ten or a dozen people there. Secretary Root and Dr. Merriam, Major Pitcher, one governor, and one author, besides myself. I sat between Mrs. Roosevelt and Secretary Root. The President sat opposite and talked over to me, and was very jolly — called me 'Oom John,' and 'Beloved Oom John' when he greeted me first.

The talk was very general. He said that on New Years' Day he shook hands with 3000 people, and that he had to pull each one along in order to get through. I told him he had good authority for that course, for that was the way Lincoln did — he exerted a pull of several pounds upon me. The President laughed and said he was glad to know that. He said his arm was very stiff from hand-shaking. He told me of a review of my book ['Ways of Nature'] by Hudson, in which Hudson had said that he saw no objection to telling things about the animals that were not true. The President said that state-

ment threw a flood of light upon Hudson's own methods. I must look up the review — in Littell's. . . . I am to go to lunch again some day, just with the family. . . .

After the lunch *en famille*, he wrote:

I met Alice and was quite taken with her. She has style, and is very individual. Attorney-General Moody was there also.

He describes a walk he had with Roosevelt:

We started about four, the President, Ted and I. It was a lively walk. . . . The mud and water, of which there was lots, flew. The President did me the compliment to ignore my age. We went at a four-mile gait through my old haunts along Rock Creek. He splashed through the mud like a school-boy and was soon bespattered to his knees. I skipped about more, and got only my shoes besmeared. We saw no birds — they could not keep up with us. I haven't walked at such a pace for years. My leg never flinched, and after I got warmed up I felt as spry as a cat and could follow the strenuous man easily. He puffed more than I did, and took off his hat much oftener to cool his head. We both talked much.

When we reached the carriage at the head of Seventeenth street, we had been walking one and three quarters' hours, and the President thought we had made six or seven miles; but I felt fresh and strong, and ready for a ten-mile pull at the same pace. I think the medicine helped my leg; it has not troubled me since, and I have had no more dizziness. Shall I take it if I am feeling all right?

When I reached Aaron's it was twenty minutes of seven, and I had to dress for dinner and be at the Cosmos Club at 7. I was to dine at Mrs. Gardiner Hubbard's, three miles out of town. They were to send their automobile for me, and I reached the Club before it did. Dinner was a fine affair. Edward Everett Hale and his daughter were there, and Graham Bell and wife — a dozen in all. Champagne flowed freely, and I drank so freely I did not sleep well.

Yesterday Mr. Sidwell of the Friends' School took me on a long drive. I lunched with Mrs. Bailey (Florence Merriam) and dined with John Joy Edson, and at nine was back here to a reception that Aaron and his wife had gotten up. I shall dine with Mrs. Willis tonight and pass the night there. Tomorrow I dine with [Dr. Frederick V.] Coville, and this is the last. I shall stay on next week and take my ease, and read in the Library. . . .

Mrs. Aaron Johns has written that once in the early nineteen-hundreds, when Mr. Burroughs was given a reception at Dr. Baker's in Washington, as she and Mr. Johns came down the stairs, facing three rooms of guests, Mr. Burroughs called

out, 'Aaron, I've got on my dress-suit — you never saw me in it before'; and the two comrades who had eaten locusts and wild honey together in the wilderness, in years long past, looked each other over approvingly. Of the occasion of which Mr. Burroughs speaks in the foregoing letter she wrote: 'He rushed in from his tramp with the President to get ready for the formal dinner to be given in his honor, saying, 'I've got to put on that dress-suit, but there's no time to change this shirt.'

'I argued,' writes Mrs. Johns, 'that it would never do, but he was determined, and had us pin it down tight to the waist-band with a big safety-pin, while our son labored with his shoes to make them look dressed up. The next morning, with a merry twinkle in his eyes, he said, "I was so entertaining nobody noticed my shirt."' This account brings to mind two occasions at the home of Dr. Johnson, in New York, when his hosts had a funny time getting him rigged out for a dinner in 'the pesky things'; for he had brought part of his evening clothes, and had left the trousers at home — had even done this with malice aforethought, and was determined to wear his dark striped trousers. 'No one sees the trousers — they are under the table,' he argued. It was only after much persuasion that he was induced to don a pair of his host's trousers. On a few occasions, for perhaps ten years, he was wheedled into wearing the full regalia, but he so loathed it that, during his later years, all attempts to persuade him were abandoned, and he went to formal functions, unmolested, in the light gray clothes which became him so well.

Excerpts from March letters follow:

March 5. I am reading the Traubel-Whitman book. . . . There is too much of it. It should have been edited. It is too choppy and staccato. After a while this tires one. It might have been equal to Eckermann's Conversations with Goethe, if there had been an Eckermann instead of a Traubel to do it. Some of my own letters should have been edited. And then, the book only covers a few months, instead of years. . . .

I understand what Walt meant in that remark about me to which you refer. He saw me more or less in the light in which he saw Gilder, and Stedman, and Howells, because I was so often associated with them in the magazines, and because I so thoroughly accepted Arnold. I had not grown cold toward him; but saw less of him, and was not so active a disciple as I had been. I had absorptions of my own. Then the crowd that surrounded him was not altogether to my liking. . . . Elsewhere he says, 'John cannot let himself go,' and that

'on the convivial side he is not one of us.' That is true. I am not as a rule social with men. . . . I have no gift of self-abandon. . . . I have courage and self-assertion in the intellectual sphere, and courage in the physical sphere, but not in the moral and human sphere. . . . I am too prudent and conservative. I could not upset the table and smash the dishes, or go on a regular jamboree. I wish I could. My books would have more tang and wildness, and I would have written better poetry. Even Walt could not teach me to be a 'bold swimmer.' I see the reason of it all in my family inheritance. . . .

March 17. . . . Yesterday a young N.Y. journalist came to write a character sketch of me for the International Syndicate of newspapers. I liked him, as I usually do the newspaper men. He said that he and the girl he is soon to marry read together an advance copy of the Cosmopolitan with my article in it, and were greatly stirred and stimulated by it. It made them resolve to live in the country. He was very much in earnest about it all. . . .

I have begun to write something for you (I thought I would not tell you, but you see I cannot keep my secrets as you can). I have got only nine pages so far — only a start — I am only trying to account for myself — how I came to take to nature-writing. So do not expect my Autobiography out of this. That may come later. . . . [This refers to parts of the Autobiographical Sketches in 'Our Friend John Burroughs.']

With the publication in March of 'Bird and Bough,' John Burroughs appeared in a new guise — that of the poet. Except for 'Waiting' (and a few other early efforts, and some negligible rhymes), Mr. Burroughs had written no verses until, while in Alaska, he wrote the three bird poems already mentioned. Later, as will be remembered, while editing his Nature Anthology, the reading of so much poetry had stimulated him to further rhyming. It was these poems, many of which had already appeared in the magazines, that he now gathered into a small volume.

He never took himself seriously as a poet. His own opinion had coincided with the candid comment of David A. Wasson, who, in 1862, on reading 'Waiting,' said that the poem did not indicate to him that Burroughs had any special call to write verse. Wasson had added:

A man of your ability and fineness of structure must necessarily be enough of a poet not to fail altogether in use of the poetic form. But all that I know of you indicates a predominance of reflective intellect — a habit of mind quite foreign from the lyrical. . . . It may be very good practice to compose in verse, as it exercises you in

terse and rhythmical expression, but I question whether your vocation lies in that direction.

Other readers, concurring with the early correspondent, will doubtless agree that Mr. Burroughs's qualities as a poet were revealed in his poetic interpretations of nature, rather than in his verse. Many a passage in his cadenced prose, and in the gems imbedded in his Journal, justify a line about him in an early poem of Robert Underwood Johnson:

'His lines make rhythm and never know it.'

Burroughs was himself quite of the opinion of Carlyle, who said to Sterling, 'Why sing your bits of thought, if you can contrive to speak them?' In fact, with his ability to view his own work objectively he once aptly said: 'I often think of myself as a flying-fish, compared to a bird, when I try to write poetry — the creature is so mechanical; it spins along, but there is no flight — no soaring.' However, when a check which seemed to him ridiculously large came for a poem, he said with a merry twinkle, 'Well, my poetry, poor as it is, has brought me more than enough to buy my shoestrings — which is better than Wordsworth's did for many years.'

So, when a reader, now and then, urged him to collect his verses into a book, he toyed with the suggestion, and went on writing a few more. He richly enjoyed a delicious bit of spitefulness from a woman writer (whom he had overlooked when commenting, pro and con, on nature writers, in his 'Real and Sham' essay), who said that Burroughs's readers could forgive him almost anything else but his poetry.

One day, half in jest, half in earnest, he said to a friend, Find me a name for my book, and I'll publish the verses." With Emerson's sparrow on the alder bough in mind, the friend suggested 'Bird and Bough,' since his verses do give the bird on the bough, with glimpses of 'river and sky.' Pleased with the title, and with the suggestion that he might appropriately use on the title-page that line from Bunyan: 'Some said, "John, print it"; others said, "Not so,"' he sent forth the bird on the bough, saying in his disarming preface that he made but one claim for his verses — that they keep a little closer to wild nature than does most of our minor poetry. A paragraph intended for this preface, but which he mislaid

and could not find till after the book was published, ran as follows:

I have a fairly well-founded conviction that my verses contain more truth than poetry. But if one cannot attain to poetry, truth is not to be despised. There is a good deal of sound natural history tucked away in these lines, if the reader has the wherewithal to find it; but my birds are not larks clapping their wings at heaven's gate, nor nightingales with their bursts of

'Eternal passion,
Eternal pain.'

Rather are they more akin to the plebeian robin who carols from the tree-tops in the intervals of stealing your cherries. Well, robin it shall be, then, and let me hope that old association will play some part in making up for the want of melody in the strain.

Mr. Burroughs used to say that he had no gift for letter-writing, but probably few of his correspondents would agree with this. He concentrated much in his brief letters, and, on occasion, instilled hope, or, at least, a reasoning courage, in many a despondent friend. To one whose eyesight was endangered he sent this letter:

I am not so ready to admit, as you seem to be, that you have dropped out of the procession. I will not admit it at all. . . . You have at least one eye left; but suppose they both go, you can fight on in the dark. Keep courage and hope, and life holds much for you yet. Your mind can see without eyes, and your hands can work by the eyes of others. You must not strike your flag yet.

In late April he wrote:

I have had company every day since I got back, and am to have more today. Yesterday I had about 30 Vassar girls and some people from Highland. Rouland stayed till Friday night. We made garden and played together like boys. Noyes and Perrine stayed all night. We had a jolly time, though their smoking was a trial to me. . . . Noyes read Whitman at night in front of the fire, and read him well. Perrine is our Millet . . . he is right out of the soil — an original. His talk is rich and suggestive and his stories are inimitable. . . . We had real *Noctes Ambrosianæ* at Slabsides. Just think, those three young men were the age (36) I was when I first came here, and yet in many ways I am as young as they are! I wonder how it will be with them when they are sixty-nine — they smoke so much, and drink so much coffee. . . .

Yes, I know Gilder's Whitman poem. It is good. The earlier one to me is called 'The Building of the Chimney.' [1] It was fifteen or

[1] The poem in which Mr. Gilder named him 'John o' Birds.'

more years ago — I was at his house at Buzzard's Bay when he built his chimney there. In his new volume I like 'Home Acres' best. 'A New Poet' is also fine. I wish Gilder had strength to match his fine lyrical quality. He is a true poet.

You will receive this on the last of the April days. . . . I am always sad to see April go. It is the mother month to me.

In the May Journal he comments on Grover Cleveland:

Meet Cleveland on the train. Like him. Kindly, serious, unaffected, humble. Young Everett Colby. Like him, too. . . . A big dinner [Periodical Publishers Association, Atlantic City] over 400 men, editors, authors, publishers, artists. Young Colby makes the star speech of the evening. A fat man, John A. Wise, tells the most laughable story — a fat man's humor comes easy. The stories of Jimmy Dodge fall rather flat. He is too lean and intellectual. Paul Morton dull. Cleveland sane and honest, but not brilliant. Van Dyke presides well.

He comments further on Cleveland in a letter:

. . . I had never had a good look at him before. He has the simple, serious, humble look and manner of a great man. I quite fell in love with the old fellow. (We are about of an age.) The star of the evening was Everett Colby — 'The Gentleman from Essex' of Sefton's article in McClure's. He is one of the coming men. His speech had the ring of real stuff, and he looks it. . . .

A number of men spoke to me about my Atlantic article, among them Edward Bok, who was very enthusiastic. Miss Vanamee says it gave her a more favorable idea of the President than she had ever had. Bishop Talbot of Pennsylvania asked to be introduced to me and was very cordial — said he recently preached a sermon from a text I had given him in something I had said about Carlyle's homesick soul. I met Bliss Carman for the first time. I liked him well. He was very quiet at table. He seems a rather solitary fellow like myself.

I am thriving finely. You know how kind and cordial the Vanamees are. Mr. V. looks well and seems in good spirits. . . . Miss V. is bright and interesting as usual. . . . We are discussing a trip abroad. Miss V. has a book on how to see Europe on four dollars a day. . . . Some teachers that I know made a three months' trip on three dollars a day.

Back at West Park, his city friends found it impossible to inveigle him away again in May:

The R's and H—— and Mr. F—— have made a dead set at me to get me out to Edison's today, but I had no desire to go. A piano recital wearies me, the pounding gets on my nerves. It is the most mechanical and unnatural of all music. The piano has no soul, and rarely does any player put a soul in it. It is to me the symbol of all

that is ugly and repellent in the modern conventional parlor. Bang! bang! bang! — how it makes me shudder! My ears are too sensitive, I suppose, and used to the softer sounds of nature. Though I remember I did like McDowell's playing fairly well — his style was very pleasing.

'Fairly well' and 'very pleasing' of the great pianist! Clearly, John o' Birds did well to eschew the piano recital and stay at Slabsides where the mourning dove, the water-thrush, and even the insistent whip-poor-will furnished the music. However, he modified this verdict on the piano less than two months later, when, at Byrdcliffe, in the summer evenings, Mr. G. Aldo Randegger, Mrs. Mary Lawrence Webster, and Miss Mercedes de Cordoba found the soul in the piano, and he sat a rapt listener as they played.

To Roosevelt in July he wrote of the boys' Indian Camp at Cos Cob:

I agree with Gilder that Thompson Seton has got hold of a big thing in his boys' Indian camp, and in thinking that you and Mrs. Roosevelt would enjoy seeing what he is doing. I have been there once and was much impressed with it all, and with the good results to the boys that are sure to follow from this scheme.

All the boy's wild energy and love of deviltry are turned into new channels, and he is taught wood-craft and natural history and Indian lore in a most fascinating way. I really think it well worthy of your attention and encouragement.

A September letter gives this glimpse of autumn callers:

One day an old couple from Missouri came and sat in my summer-house. The woman said she had a Sunday-school class of six boys to whom she writes of the many interesting things she sees in her travels. Up in Albany she had seen them gathering and canning peas; she had also seen a man whose business it was to gather eggs for market — he had been a collector of eggs for over 30 years — he was very interesting, and she had told her boys about him. 'And now,' she said, — I began to feel very modest and self-depreciating, — 'I shall tell them about what I have seen here — these vineyards.' Poor me! I could not even go in with the egg-collector! I did not take her in the Study and show her my row of books!

In late September the Wawee (the children's name for 'water' gave the name to Julian's cabin hunting-launch) set out on its maiden cruise, with Mr. Burroughs, his son and family, and two others on board — a boat-load of inexperi-

ence, as Mr. Julian Burroughs said. Mr. Burroughs, though thoroughly at home on land was very much at sea on the water, and Julian had never managed anything but a row-boat. Neither had ever run any kind of an engine. Notwithstanding, they boldly attempted the cruise down the Hudson, through the Harlem river, and across the Sound to Three-mile Harbor, near East Hampton.

Mr. Burroughs writes a friend in Poughkeepsie:

. . . Monday night we anchored near Hell Gate. On Tuesday we had a shocking experience. The engine had not been running right, and we had the luck to find here on another boat, the young man who had been up to West Park to adjust our engine.

He spent an hour or two with us, fixing things, and in leaving our boat for his, when we were under way, his boat capsized with him beneath it. It was a horrible moment. . . . Soon he appeared, and we saw he couldn't swim, and was fast sinking. Julian sprang into his little tender and got to him just as he was going down, and held him by the hair till I got a rope to them. The man was nearly gone, but he revived. . . .

Excerpts from his account of the return trip, dated October 29, show the dangers they survived (the women and children made the return trip by rail):

We left East Hampton Tuesday morning. Gardener's Bay was smooth, but covered with fog. By and by the fog lifted. How our thoughts and wishes pushed us faster than the little engine could carry us! At one we went through Plum Gut a-kiting, the tide with us. The Sound was smooth and we made good speed, constantly turning a speculative eye on the sky — those treacherous winds — how watchful we were of them! . . .

. . . We kept well out in the Sound to escape all the reefs and shoals we saw when coming up. . . . The moon was obscured by dark masses of clouds. Our sole reliance was the compass.

I held her due west when I could, but after a time, no lights appearing, I got a little nervous and had trouble to hold our course.

Finally a thick obscurity settled down upon the face of the waters, but the engine was doing well and sang her old song. Nine o'clock, and no lights visible, I was rattled, and had harder and harder work to hold the little ship to her course. I would forget which way to push her to bring her right. The compass and the lantern were on the floor at my feet, and my eye riveted upon them. How nervous and changeable that compass did seem! hardly pointing true a minute at a time. A sea-bird would have thought nothing of it, but we were land-birds.

After a while we could make out to the north of us, a faint glow upon the sky, which we knew must be the lights of New Haven.

About half past nine, Julian could see the shore-lights . . . presently the Lighthouse light. . . .

So I turned her due north and ran for the light. . . . The wind freshened and the black clouds grew blacker. On we rushed in the face of the increasing wind. How slowly we gained on that light! We must have been six or seven miles out on the Sound. . . . We cast our anchor at ten-thirty, but got little sleep, winds and clouds were threatening, and the darkness was deep. . . .

At daylight we were off to try our fortunes outside. . . . As we neared Penfield Lighthouse the waves grew bigger, until we saw the grizzlies. They rolled up behind us. Huge gulfs would open, first on the right side, then on the left, and it seemed as if we must topple over into them. But the little boat held her own bravely. . . . When we were about two miles from the greatest danger-point, off Penfield Light, Julian's alert ear caught a strange sound from the engine. . . . We were much disturbed, with those huge waves reaching for us. Presently the sound increased as if something was loose about the engine and slatting and banging against the floor. Still we could find nothing. We could see the lighthouse at Black Rock Harbor, a couple of miles ahead. For this I headed her. This gave the grizzlies a chance to take us quartering, and they punished us dreadfully. . . . With the hammering and banging increasing, in half an hour we entered the peaceful little harbor. . . .

We found a little pocket in the harbor. . . . The wind increased with driving rain. Before dark the waves began to leap over the sea-wall. They came over like wild sheep pursued by wolves, and how high they flirted their tails! But the wall took the run all out of them, and when they reached us they were harmless. . . .

We found the Sound rough the next morning and wind dead ahead. As we went on, the waves became vicious. They snubbed the little craft as she had never been snubbed before. She would rear up like a horse vaulting a fence, and come down on those waves fiercely, battering them into foam.

When almost eight miles from Saugatuck, Julian came up out of the cabin with an excited look on his face, and a broken belt in his hand, — the belt that runs the wheel that lubricates the interior of the engine. I wanted to turn back, but he said No, he would turn the wheel by hand. So there he sat and turned that wheel, while I held her toward Saugatuck, the waves growing less spiteful as we neared the land. Then the engine began to have the belly-ache again, but we could then see the entrance to the sweet little harbor. . . . I went ashore with the broken belt . . . a man mended it with a fine copper wire. . . .

The next day we were on our way before six. . . . How sweet the morning, and how our hearts rejoiced! Often the surface of the water was like satin. . . . I watched the mended belt, while Julian held the helm, and the engine sang the song we liked. . . . Off Execution Light the engine again began to complain, and her lower parts were feverish; so we anchored to let her cool off. . . . At one-thirty we ran into

Port Morris Harbor. Men on shore told us they expected to see us strike a rock, just as they did the day Laura steered us in. . . . Our engineer fixed us up again, and piloted us through Little Hell Gate. . . . At four-thirty we were off into the Hudson. We ran that night by the light of the moon. At Croton we had another battle with wind and waves . . . but we lived through it, and after about two hours' sleep, we pulled up and headed for home, reaching here at noon.

His Journal has the brief entry:

At peace at last in the quiet harbor of Slabsides.

4. More about Whitman

In the haven of his woodland home the returned voyager settled down to write and to answer the 'half-bushel of letters' that had accumulated in his absence.

At this time occurred a spirited interchange of letters about Whitman with Richard Watson Gilder, Mr. Bliss Perry, and others. In these spontaneous letters, Mr. Burroughs gave utterance to some of his most eloquent writing about Whitman.

[*J. B. to R. W. G. Nov. 2*]

. . . I shall send Doctor Barrus your letter to Perry, as you suggest, tho' I know there are things in it that will pain her, as they did me. . . . Christ-like, Walt seemed to prefer the company of publicans and sinners to that of the 'best society' of his time. He doubtless found more reality there. . . . Whitman identifies himself with sinners in his poems in a way that to me does not suggest the 'semi-hobo,' but suggests the god. I love to dwell on his divine commonness — his rich endowment of all fundamental human traits. . . . He was a 'tramp' in the sense that all the great poet-prophets have been tramps — he was near to common things, and to universal humanity.

As a man I did not find any suggestion of the 'hobo' in him, nor of the 'madman,' neither did I, nor do I, as a poet. He is the sanest of the sane. I do not hesitate to say that no other work has ever been produced in this world so much in the spirit of Creation itself as 'Leaves of Grass.' This feeling grows upon me. You compare him, to his disadvantage, with Emerson, but in power, in sweep, in mass, in that pristine elemental push and energy, what comparison is there between them? Whitman was a world poet-prophet, Emerson was a New England poet-prophet. Emerson has already had his day — a rare and precious spirit to whom you and I owe a great debt, but he can never be to our children what he was to us. I turn to him now as to a reminiscence, to try to call up those days of my youth. I turn to Whitman as to the sea, or the starry heavens, to expand my soul.

After the New England poets, the lift of Whitman's lines is like the surge of ocean billows compared to the ripple of an inland lake.

I have occasion to be astonished more and more frequently at the way his soul is marching on. I meet people wherever I go, especially among women, who are coming under the spell of his great spirit . . . — young girls to whom I would not have dared to speak his name, married women, who know motherhood and the realities of life, women teachers in girls' colleges — among all educated classes I find the same growing, awakening interest in Whitman. . . . In fifty years from now how antiquated will seem the epithets you apply to him in the first part of your letter — 'semi-hobo,' 'ranting theorizer,' 'half animal, and half religious frenzy'!

One thing I plume myself upon in this world, and that is that I saw the greatness of the poet from the first — that no disguise of the common, the near, the rough, the 'tramp,' could conceal from me the divinity that was back of all, and challenged me to the contest. Familiar intercourse with him did not blur this impression. That head, that presence, those words of love and of wisdom convinced like Nature herself. I pitied those who saw him, and yet saw him not. At times I used to be impatient with you because you were more or less under the public delusion that he was a common vulgar person, and only now and then a poet. Your conventional training and associations stood in your way. You will not see his like again. The gods never come back.

One mystery in his life can now never be cleared up — the mystery connected with his children. I am disturbed, as you are, by his failure to recognize them. If I only knew his reasons! He loved children; he was deeply attached to the child of his brother George, and greatly grieved at his death. There *must* have been some circumstances or conditions that were beyond his control, that made him apparently ignore his own offspring.[1]

I have not read Mr. Perry's book, but shall very soon. . . .

[*J. B. to C. B. Nov.* 19]

I was much interested in what you said of Mr. Perry's Whitman. Of course it leaves much to be said, but it comes the nearest to being an adequate account and estimate of Whitman of any life of him that has appeared.

I do not think there is any force in that comparison with Rousseau. . . . Rousseau was weak, weak, — at times a maudlin sentimentalist, at others almost a fool. Whitman was strong, strong; always calm and sane; always at ease in the world; carried plenty of ballast, and cut his way deeply and steadily through the waves in the face of many adverse winds. Some of his ideas may have been the

[1] In later years Mr. Burroughs was strongly inclined to think that the story of Whitman's children was a figment of Whitman's own brain, the wish being, as it were, the father to the thought. In support of which opinion it may be mentioned that instances of senile fabrication (unconscious fabrication) are not at all uncommon in persons afflicted as was Whitman in his later years.

same as those of Rousseau's, but I doubt if he was at all influenced by him. It is character that finally influences us, and not ideas — the man behind the idea. Whitman had no doubt read Rousseau Indeed, I find one phrase in the 'Leaves' that seems to have been boldly taken from the 'Confessions' — 'behavior lawless as snow-flakes.' This sentence doubtless stuck to Walt from his reading of the 'Confessions'; but I fail to see the mark of anything deep and formative upon him from Rousseau.

Ransack the world for Whitman's forbears and you only find hints here and there — vague, faint hints at that. The thing he did not *learn*, and could not *learn*, and which he did to an unprecedented degree, was to put a live man in a book — and a very great man, with candor and courage and love like that of a god. His book is not a confession, it is an incarnation; and does not, to me, suggest Rousseau any more than it suggests Thoreau, with whom he had many loves and attractions in common. Shall we say that Whitman got his local pride, his love of the open air, and of primitive things — the hut, the shore, the animals, — from Thoreau? Did Thoreau's Essay on Walking inspire 'The Open Road'?

The origin of a poet's ideas is a secondary matter: to what extent does he make them his own — bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh? . . . Whitman's personality and soul-power so dominate his book that the intellectual propositions are like the bones under the flesh — you have to feel for them.

Whitman, at least in the hey-day of his powers, was certainly lacking in something which society much prizes, and cannot well get along without — taste — a delicate perception and appreciation of the finer relations of men in the social organism. But if he had had taste in this sense, he would not have written 'Leaves of Grass.' He was a barbarian, entirely of the open air as opposed to parlors and libraries — and ignored, or was insensible of, the conventional proprieties and reticencies and modesties, that make social life possible. This is the price he paid for that elemental power and quality of his work that makes it so much in the spirit of creation itself.

Try to think of Emerson, or any other man who is largely the product of the life of the family, the college, the church, making the avowals that Whitman makes, identifying himself with the common, the near, even with the sinful and criminal. It is unthinkable.

The apostles of the gospel of the cultured, the choice, the refined, play their part; we must have them if society is not to relapse into barbarism. But to say this is not to condemn 'Leaves of Grass.' The book does not make for coarseness or crime or anarchy — it makes for largeness, health, robustness, charity, love, contentment, faith, fatherhood, motherhood, and freedom for every slave on the face of the earth. Its oceans of love and sympathy save it. Its essential religiousness is like the sky over all. It does not, as has been charged, blur the difference between good and evil; it finds good in all, even in evil.

The 'semi-hobo' which Mr. Gilder saw in Whitman, shows the

narrowness of Mr. Gilder's vision; and I cannot agree with Mr. Perry that with Whitman 'the gentleman was no higher than the man — the saint no finer product than the sinner'; and that 'with a soul that instinctively cried "Glory! Glory!" he nevertheless did not perceive that the glory of the terrestrial was one, and the glory of the celestial was another.' It was only in Whitman's large view, the cosmic sweep of his vision, that these things were equal. The earth is a star with the rest, though our senses do not take in the fact. The terrestrial and the celestial *are* one, unless our astronomy is at fault; though St Paul's eloquence long ago persuaded us they were not; and the saint and the sinner are alike embosomed in the same universe of mystery and wonder, and are equal, when contemplated in their absolute and eternal relations — the relations in which Whitman viewed them.

He did not discount the gentleman, but he put a premium, so to speak, on common humanity. Personally, he liked both, if they were genuine. He liked culture and refinement if they were not had at the expense of the native human traits. . . . His most intimate friends in Washington were William O'Connor and Charles Eldridge, both men of culture and refinement, both very racy and human. True, he clung to the unlettered car-driver, Peter Doyle, at the same time, but Doyle was himself a kind of mute, inglorious Whitman, and a manly and lovable character. . . .

I strenuously deny that he lost sight of the different degrees in the scale of human values. . . . It did not enter into his scheme to appraise the social or cultural, or even the conventional moral values, but the fundamental human values upon which our lives, and the life of the State, finally rest — love, comradeship, religiousness, fatherhood, motherhood, manly endeavor, freedom, equality, and the divine average. The special, the exceptional, he did not fix his eye upon, but upon the universal average, and that which all may have upon the same terms. . . . — our common humanity, the soul, the body, sex, and the final sources of our moral and physical well-being.

You have only to enlarge your vision and exalt your faith enough, when all things become divine and beautiful; you have only to keep your humanity up to the proper pitch, when all men and women become your brothers and sisters; you have only to look deep enough, and high enough, to see that 'All's right with the world'; and that there is 'no failure or imperfection in it.' But in our ordinary moods we do not see these things. The poet-seer, in his extraordinary moods, sees them.

Of course if Whitman does not take us with him to his mount of vision and make the competent reader see what he sees, then that is a serious failure. That he occasionally fails to do this, I shall not dispute.

We did not know, till Whitman came, what it meant to carry the democratic spirit into literature. We see now how the attempt has exposed him to misinterpretation, even of such appreciative readers as Gilder, Perry, . . . and others . . . because of the fervor and all-

inclusiveness of his love . . . an all-inclusiveness and sympathy like that of God himself. The way Whitman identifies himself with outcasts and criminals — the unfaltering, unblushing way in which he does it, is to me more than human.

Well, I started to write you a letter about some exceptions to things in Perry's book, and have written you an essay. . . . Can you pardon me? . . . When I begin to write about Whitman I cannot easily stop. I began forty years ago, and am far from the end yet. He lures me on and on. . . . His book is the man, and all my love and reverence for him in those long-gone days come back, and I miss him anew.

CHAPTER XXIII

NEAR AND FAR

1906–1909

Keep not standing fix'd and rooted,
Briskly venture, briskly roam;
Head and hand, where'er thou foot it,
And stout heart are still at home.
Carlyle's translation of *Wilhelm Meister*

To fail to give emphasis to the constantly recurring reminiscence in Journal and letters would be to slight a dominant note in the personality of John Burroughs. To each friend with whom he was truly himself he revealed this chronic homesickness of the soul. One of his November letters is a case in point:

I have been dull and despondent of late. Often I know it is my liver, at others I believe it is the world-sorrow that increases with one's years. I have much less of it when away from home, because I have more social stimulus and forget myself more. Here, the shadows, the regrets, and the soul's homesickness close in upon me. It would be much better for me if I had some responsibility and occupation, as you have — something to turn these gloomy thoughts out of doors. . . . So much of the present is dull and empty, and the lure of the future has become very weak.

As I was walking about East Orange I was constantly thinking of that vague, yearning, but happy youth who walked and sighed there forty-six years ago; whose hopes of the future fell far short of the reality, but who relished every hour of life; and I secretly envied him.

The years give us much, but, oh, they take so much from us! My success, such as it is, seems a big price to pay for what I have lost. It was the doing of the thing that brought satisfaction. But the years have brought me much . . . and I will not complain.

Not one vestige of the Past could I find in East Orange — not even the site of the old schoolhouse. . . . There were large imposing schoolhouses where I found my name was loved and honored, and a Carnegie Library where I was considered 'some punkins.'

Those years — '59 and '60 — . . . before I had written anything for publication, I walked and dreamed and read and was homesick, the same as now. I earned less than four hundred a year, but had enough. One winter I had an attack of rhyming, but worked it off without serious results. The rumbles of the Civil War began to be heard while I was there, and the John Brown raid occurred. . . .

Writing of the Harper-Alden dinner which he attended in November, he said:

I sat at a table with Mrs. Custer (whom I stole from another table), Moncure Conway, Thomas Nelson Page, Edwin Markham, Lyman Abbott, and President Thwing.

Colonel Harvey in his opening speech said the years '36 and '37, produced many men of genius, and he proceeded to name Alden, Aldrich, 'Mark Twain,' Howells, Carnegie, Pierpont Morgan, Admiral Dewey, and others — then forgot me! But I was not sorry he did.

Dec. 28. . . . We had a quiet Christmas at Julian's. . . . I read the Sonnets [Mrs. Browning's] again, and have since read Wilde's 'De Profundis.' It is impressive. What a genius was destroyed or perverted in that man! He is in many ways a paradox. He seems to think of all things in terms of art. Christ is to him the great Artist. Did I ever tell you that he came here once to see me? Henry Abbey brought him — a splendid talker, and a handsome man, but a voluptuary. As he walked from you, there was something in the motion of his hips and back that was disagreeable.

With the waning year he wrote Miss Edith Rickert, then in England:

Do you want me to come and help make that garden? I should indeed like to delve in that historic soil, fattened by so many races of centuries and time; but the only bulb I have ever planted was an onion, and of the making of flower gardens I have had no experience. . . . Only the wild flowers appeal to me, just as only the spontaneous in poetry moves me. . . . But women love flower gardens and to potter about them. Dig and plant, and transplant, Edith; it will do you good. That soil on your fingers will make you hold your pen more firmly — more of the earth-spirit will get into your books. . . .

You look well in this picture, and strong. It is a face of power — that finely-cut and ample mouth, and those eyes! I almost quail before them. I do not remember that you had those day-of-judgment eyes when you used to come to Slabsides.

To a correspondent much disturbed over the growing disbelief in a personal immortality he wrote:

I think you are needlessly exercised on this subject. You are like a caged bird beating its wings against the wires. What matters it? If our conscious identity does not continue after death, we shall never know it. We shall not lie in our graves regretting it. If it does continue, so much the better. No argument for it can satisfy you or me. Whitman once said to me that he would as soon hope to argue a man into good health, as to argue him into a belief in immortality.

He said he *knew* it was so without proof; but I could never light my candle at his great torch.

The moment you go into the court of reason with this case, you are non-suited. There is no ground to go upon. It is entirely a matter of faith; and as this is more and more an age of reason, and less and less an age of faith, the belief in a personal immortality after death is dying out. It cannot be helped; we are in an ocean current — a trend of the universal mind. *But read Whitman's poem on 'Burial.'* [1]

A severe attack of influenza late in February was followed by much disturbance in heart-action and a persistent cough. He was able to spend his seventieth birthday in Atlantic City. One of his birthday letters was from Edward Everett Hale,[2] who implied that it was John Burroughs, instead of his 'Double,' that undid him:

I have been looking at my Diary for April 3, 1837, to see what I was doing when you were being born!

Alas! I was struggling with an examination in Logic!

Is it perhaps true that any lapses I may have made since in Premises and Conclusions are due to my interest then in your appearance upon the Horizon? Anyway, we have both lived long enough for me to thank you for coming. . . .

A May letter shows the septuagenarian on his native heath:

Yesterday as Johnny and I came back from our fishing-trip to Batavia Kill, I dropped into the Post Office and found the best fishing yet, — what I caught pleased me more than the trout — your letter, the Ms., and the box of arbutus. . . .

We had a beautiful day in that broad, long, farm-lined valley. . . . We ate our lunch beside the stream, and I ate one of Ann's maple cakes, which I had not dared to eat indoors. I told her I could eat one every day if I could eat it beside that stream.

Oh, that clean-hearted, bright-eyed, hurrying stream — how I wish I could walk and talk with it daily, yes, and eat my cake beside it, too. Maybe we will walk and talk with the Willowemoc in June.

I go home today. My cousins left Tuesday. One was a Baptist minister, but I liked the farmer best. The trouble with clergymen is that so few of them have any religion — I mean, any innate love and reverence for the works of creation. They lead a sort of falsetto life — they play a part. Poor devils! I pity them.

. . . In the woods I found the leather-wood in bloom — which I never saw before. In the sap-bush I saw a bird I never before saw in

[1] Called in many editions 'To Think on Time.'

[2] Permission to quote this letter is kindly given by Miss Ellen Day Hale.

the home woods — the log-cock, a big black woodpecker, very rare. . . .

Writing from Slabsides on May 20th, he tells of recent journeyings:

I am writing to you with a new pen and a new pen-holder which I have just been out and cut in the edge of the swamp [cat-tail], and a mosquito tasted my blood while I was doing it. I found the yellow lady-slipper there, and the *Orchis spectabilis*. Visitors to SS clean off my flowers so that there is but one yellow lady-slipper left where there used to be a dozen or more.

There was a gang of 66 or more from Poughkeepsie Saturday, and a dozen or so yesterday. . . .

I was very self-denying at the Albany dinner [Periodical Publishers Ass'n] — ate very gingerly, declined the champagne and all other wine, and took only a little Scotch whiskey. Hence I was all right the next day. Gilder was not in the party. He was at Four Brooks Farm, writing poetry, Johnson said. Johnson represented the Century. Doubleday and Page had three or four representatives, but nine-tenths of the crowd were strangers to me. Many young men introduced themselves to me and confessed their debt, etc. — some of them in very earnest terms. There were but few white heads in the company. Speaker Cannon was there and asked to see me. Governor Hughes said he felt honored by being allowed to shake my hand. There was a burst of hand-clapping when I was presented to the Governor, but I had no idea who it was for till they told me. They clapped Markham also.

Governor Hughes made a splendid speech, full of noble and inspiring sentiments and ideas. I like him immensely. . . . He is bound to go higher before the people let him go.

May 29. What a lecture you did read me! It made me smile. Had I said all, or any, of the things in those pretended interviews, I should have merited your scolding; but with the exception of the short one in the Tribune, all those interviews with me were fakes — made up in the office by their chief faker, I suppose.

A young man from the —— —— was here in the study about three minutes between trains — just long enough for me to refer him to my Atlantic article of 1903, as containing all I had to say on the subject. . . . He shot out of the door and ran for his train. . . . You can see what use he made of my article! The other interviewer I never even saw. . . . So you see the worst fakers of all are the daily papers. What an outrage it is! But what can one do? Of course these things are forgotten the next day, like everything else in that sea of froth and carrion, but it is exasperating just the same. Could I ever have called —— 'an upstart naturalist,' or ——'s work 'rot'? How I would like to kick that reporter! Damn him! Did any of it sound like *me?*

This refers to the reagitation of the real and sham natural history controversy which was again started up by the Roosevelt interview in 'Everybody's Magazine,' already referred to in Chapter XX.

Among the essays Mr. Burroughs wrote that summer were 'Nature as I See It,' 'Loitering with Nature,' and 'President Roosevelt as a Nature Lover.'

Before submitting the last-named paper to the 'Outlook,' Oom John had sent it for criticism to 'His Transparency,' and the latter, after making a few minor suggestions and deleting a few names, expressed his delight in the paper, yet declared that Oom John had markedly overstated the case as to his (T. R.'s) powers of observation, and that after their trip together in the Yellowstone he realized how infinitely better and truer Oom John's eyes were than his own.

When this article was incorporated in the little book 'Camping and Tramping with Roosevelt,' which was published that autumn, Roosevelt declared fervently to Oom John that the book was one of the legacies he was proudest to hand down to his children.

In late July the same crew which took the first hazardous cruise in the Wawee set off on a simpler, safer one up the Hudson, through the Champlain Canal, — 'afield in a boat,' — and on into Lake Champlain. While in that region, visiting Mr. Irving Bacheller at Robinwood Camp, Mr. Burroughs wrote in his Journal: 'Four restful happy days. Bacheller a large, kindly, brotherly sort of man; like him much.'

In late August, from Roxmor, in Woodland Valley, he wrote of friends encountered there:

> Miss Hannum, the dean of Colorado University, is a woman of exceptional intellectual power, and she stimulated me to a good deal of talk. Yesterday we spent half the day — we three — sitting under the pine trees on the creek-bank talking. The place was charming, and our talk flowed nearly as unceasing as the creek. Miss Haight is a Whitman lover, but Miss Hannum is not, so we discussed the subject pretty thoroughly. There were birds there, too, and trout jumping in the limpid waters. I was fairly happy all the day. It was such a place and time as you would have enjoyed.
>
> Last evening at the artist Craig's I met some interesting people. Today I am going to the camp of Prof. Moulton of Vassar, to dinner, and then hope to walk up to my old camp above Larkin's. . . .

His delight in a September visit to Peconic is shown in the accompanying excerpts:

I am writing you this in the 8 × 12 cabin which Rouland calls mine, and which I have named 'The Pebble.' It is within a stone's throw of the Fish House and suits me well. I spend many hours each day here. . . . I can get oysters and clams and crabs close by — a sort of seaside Slabsides for me.

I am sure I have laid in a store of health and strength. They are both very kind to me and seem glad to have me here.

How I do like a hut or cabin! I could not live in a palace, but in a hut I am as well suited as a turtle in his shell. It is reducing life to its simplest terms. One is a part of nature then in a sense he cannot be in a fine house. The hut is his hole in the day, and the elements are close at hand. In The Pebble I am a part of the shore and the bay, and it feels good. . . . Wednesday I plan to meet Mrs. Burroughs in N.Y., and go to Asbury Park.

At that time he wrote of visiting one of the newspaper offices and trying to ferret out who had palmed off 'another tissue of lies' in a spurious 'interview' with him, and was pained to learn that it was presumably by one for whom he had entertained a friendly regard.

The habit of faking, he found, was spreading to fields other than those of natural history. Credited with interviews he had never given, and made to father articles he had never written, he now wrote that certain New York friends insisted on perpetrating a 'sham birthday' upon him — in November. Though seeing no rhyme nor reason in it, he obligingly consented to the fake celebration, but fled to Slabsides as soon as it was over, where, intrenched, he could not be routed even to attend the dinner of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He would dine with his dog at Slabsides, on puffed rice and milk, he declared, rather than return to that Babylon. So there he tarried, and finished his essay, 'The Gospel of Nature' ('Time and Change').

After the proof of 'Leaf and Tendril' was off his hands, while he and Mrs. Burroughs were in Atlantic City, he wrote of the reaction after the strain of the book:

I am well, but vacant and listless. I suffer these late years from having no cares or responsibilities. Such things afford an anchorage that keeps one from drifting too much. . . . I need such contact, even if I chafe under it. . . . I doubtless made a mistake when I turned the

farm over to Julian. . . . I am less firmly rooted to life. . . . Every spring I have a vague longing to plant myself again — to earn my bread in the old way as my fathers did. . . .

. . . Which of these titles do you like best — 'Untaught Wisdom,' or 'Wild Wisdom'?

On the twenty-first of January he wrote to Mr. Gilder:

I did not hear of the death of Stedman till last night, and I have thought of little else since. He looked so well when I saw him that day in November in your office. How much I regret now that I did not see more of him these last years. How our regrets over the dead always come thronging upon us when it is too late! Perhaps I should have seen him again at the Carnegie dinner on the 19th had I gone. . . .

He was a fine spirit, and he has made a lasting mark in our literature.

[Journal, Feb. 26.] To Washington today. The sight of the dome of the Capitol against the blue, as I have so often seen it, makes me both glad and sad, the sadness predominates. . . .

Stay with the Bakers till March 2. Lunch with President Roosevelt on 27th. Find him looking well and as unruffled as ever I saw him. Told me that President Murray Butler had written him a letter strongly condemning his famous message to Congress — said the message made any American hang his head with shame. The President seemed astonished that Butler should look at it that way, but said nothing in his own defence. Said he was glad I liked the message.

It was not an academic document — that is why Butler could not stand it. There was no stage-thunder in it; it was full of the real thing; and the elegant, academic mind of Butler recoiled from it. . . .

In early March, after a week in the home of Mr. Richard De Loach at Experiment, Georgia, Mr. and Mrs. Burroughs went on to Orange Park, Florida. From there he writes:

Here we are in this paradise, lotus-eating with other lotus-eaters. It seems quite like midsummer, some days, a soft hazy tranquillity brooding over all the scene. We look out upon the St Johns, as we look out upon the Hudson at home, only this river is three miles wide and the bank is a level plain dotted with noble trees only fifteen or twenty feet above the water.

We are guests of Mr. and Mrs. Van Buren of Louisville, Kentucky, and their hospitality is royal and genuine. Trowbridge and his wife are here, and eight or ten other guests — two literary young women from Boston, an artist from N.Y., two Kentucky girls, and others. . . . We walk and drive amid these noble avenues of trees, or sit on the porches. Today we are going on the river in a launch.

The birds are singing and nesting, the flower and fruit trees are blooming, and the strawberries ripening. It is all too good to be true. They want us to stay on until April, but we shall probably start back on the 20th.

Trowbridge is a man I love very much, and we spend much time together. He often reminds me of Whitman, and then he is associated with Whitman in my mind. Mrs. Van Buren is a poet of no mean order.

In the midst of his weighty cares, President Roosevelt sends Oom John bits of bird gossip — the white-crowned sparrow is lingering on the White House grounds — he finds its song less attractive than that of the white-throat. Oom John writes the President of a woodchuck chasing a pacifistic collie from a field; tells of his bird-nesting; and asks the President to observe what the goldfinches in his locality line their nests with — whether it is, as in the Catskills, thistle-down. He writes also of natural selection, of books, of trusts, policies, the tariff, and adds:

I am bound to tell you that I like the Democratic platform better than I do the Republican; and that I think if the people had as much confidence in the Democratic party as they have in its leader, Bryan would be elected. But Judge Hay's characterization of the Democratic party one cannot forget — 'A fortuitous combination of unrelated elements.'

He wrote Roosevelt that the reason he and others could not get up enthusiasm for Taft was probably because they had 'been so long stimulated by a so much more vigorous and picturesque personality.' T. R. seldom or never replied to J. B.'s sallies into the field of politics, but confined himself chiefly to natural-history topics; his silence, however, did not deter Oom John from having his say on politics from time to time.

After a round of gayeties in New York, a visit with the Mabies, a dinner to the artist Whittredge, seeing Homer Davenport's fowl and horses, attending celebrations at Lehigh University, and at the Carnegie Institute, Mr. Burroughs went on to Washington, there writing from the White House in May:

I reached here last night at seven. The President was out horseback riding in the rain. At dinner I met him and Mrs. R., and five or six others, among them Miss French (Octave Thanet), a large, fat

woman, very bright. After dinner we went in the big East room to look at lantern-slides by a Russian, of scenes in Nova Zembla. . . .

It is raining this morning and looks unpromising for the Pine Knot trip,[1] but we are off early.

Late in June he tarried with friends at Sagapanock, Long Island. A glimpse of the merry party comes to me in a recent letter from one of the friends who witnessed his dancing a sandpiper dance with a vivacious maiden, while the camera caught them in the act, and the blue eye of the sea peeped at them over the dunes.

In July a dream long dreamed came true. He had often wished to go back for the summer and settle down on the home-farm. This he did when he joined Dr. John Douglas Johnson and family, and others, who rented of his brother Curtis a dilapidated farmhouse on the east end of the Burroughs Homestead farm. There, in the sparsely furnished old house, with an apology for a stove, helped out by the Primus oil-stove from Slabsides, they camped for a few weeks. It was in the days when the country road was grass-grown; when the milk-cart was the only wagon that passed the little house by the side of the road — in the days before pilgrims had found out this new retreat; when most of the callers were chipmunks and woodchucks, the latter being so numerous that the Lodge was jestingly named for them; and the name stuck.

One afternoon, with blankets, hammocks, and provisions, we climbed to the summit of Old Clump, toward sunset; camped there overnight, and, while looking off toward the Southern Catskills, listened to the hermit thrush in the moonlight; and were awakened by his singing with the dawn.

It was that summer that 'Uncle John' discovered the trick of carrying a skunk by the tail with impunity. A skunk being reported as caught in a trap at the Old Home, he invited the family over to see him hold the animal while his nephew should shoot it. As we stood around, curious, and discreetly distant, while he nonchalantly held the wood-pussy, meanwhile explaining that it was impossible for it to unmask its batteries with its tail in that position — something happened. As the Spiritualists would say, 'The conditions were not right,' or, as the Christian Scientists would explain, 'He had not

[1] His account of the Pine Knot visit he did not write till after the death of Roosevelt ('Under the Maples').

grasped the truth — was still holding on to error or unbelief.' Be that as it may, he quickly let go the tail he had been holding, and fled ignominiously. A shower of golden-green spray gleamed for an instant in the sunlight, then wasted its sweetness on the summer air.

Mr. Burroughs often spoke of the unsophisticated ways of his father, apparently recognizing no parallel in himself; but he proved his sonship one day at Roxbury while waiting on the crowded platform at the railway station. Chancing, in a glance at his niece, a middle-aged woman, to note that she had recently been conspicuously helped out by the dentist, and with a similar but somewhat unsuccessful experience of his own in mind, he called out, unmindful of the bystanders, 'Olly, can you bite an apple with your false teeth?' Olly blushed, but heroically answered, 'Yes, Uncle John, I can — now I'm getting used to them.'

We who listened will not soon forget those summer evening talks on geology and astronomy between Mr. Burroughs and Dr. Johnson. The talkers were stimulated by finding glacial markings on the old Devonian rocks; and by the brilliant August skies which continually challenged their imaginations. During one of those talks Mr. Burroughs gave the Oriental's definition of eternity: 'When the Himalayas shall be ground to powder by a gauze veil *floating against them* once in a thousand years!'

From Webster Lake, New Hampshire, whither he and Mrs. Burroughs went in late August, he describes new scenes:

> I am writing, seated on Webster's rock in a little wooded and rocky promontory on the shore of Webster's Lake. There is a tradition that Webster used to walk up from the village and sit here to see the sun rise. The rock is a huge granite boulder with a natural seat carved out on one side. My old friend, 'Raven's Nest,' when a boy fished with him on this lake. . . . It is a good place to see the sun rise over the low wooded hills and the sparkling waters of the lake, and I can well believe that Webster, in his earlier days, may have sat here and watched the sun rise. There was something so big and elemental about the man that he must have responded to the great natural phenomenon.
>
> Yesterday we drove to his birthplace, five miles from here. The little frame house in which he was born now forms a part of another house a few rods away. . . . Only a granite boulder with his name and date marks the site of his birthplace.
>
> I walked about with a feeling of real veneration, for Webster was a

very great man. Had he only had some of Roosevelt's high uncompromising ideals, *and stood by them*, what a proud name his would be!

In September, after taking a hand as of old in 'the grape-racket,' he went with his son and family on the Wawee to East Hampton, saying, 'I have no heart for it, but am afraid to let them go alone.'

I sat much of the time on deck. Not much life visible, but a little insect life. Dragon flies would go by toward the Connecticut shore with a jaunty air; butterflies occasionally went by, some evidently weary and bewildered. We saw many field crickets on the surface of the water, miles from ashore, and apparently as dry-shod as upon the land. Often they seemed to make a rush for the boat as if to get aboard, and I could fancy them reaching up an imploring hand or foot. We gave one weary dragon-fly a lift. He came aboard utterly fagged out, and dropped upon the deck, the most complete picture of insect exhaustion I ever saw. His wings drooped, his head drooped, his body drooped — he was about ready to give up the battle. He rode a long ways, then disappeared.

That autumn Mr. Burroughs, with his dog Rover, spent many weeks at Slabsides writing on evolution. Though never loved as were his earlier dogs, Rover was still a cherished companion, and many a passage about dogs in the later writings is the result of experiences he and Rover had shared. It is Rover that one glimpses in this passage:

One thing which shows the low psychic life of the dog is his enormous capacity for sleep. If nothing is doing, he can apparently sleep all the time, sleep all night, and sleep all day, the week through. Physical activity or nothing with him. He has little or no mind to keep awake. Evidently he does not think or brood or reminisce. He runs, or he sleeps.

One trait I envy my dog: he never finds a walk or a run over the same route tiresome or uninteresting. The moment we start he is all alertness and expectation, the old and familiar become new and strange at once. Adventure lurks on every hand; he is sure something exciting will happen around the corner, or behind that rock, or over that knoll.

He is the true pedestrian, always on the trail, or near the trail, of some notable game. If he sits down for a moment, he is constantly feeling the air with his nose, his interest rarely flags. To his heightened instinct other people's cats, other people's hens, other people's cows or pigs or sheep, are fit subjects for reprisal. Oh, if my own interest and powers of observation could always be heightened by a walk as his are!

In the Journal for the new year, Mr. Burroughs shudders over the terrible Messina disaster; and comments on some New Thought books, recently sent him as 'neither science nor literature,' adding, 'If the ideas of Emerson could be reduced to jelly — all the lime and iron taken from them — that would be like the New Thought.' He finds stimulation in a visit from Mr. Richard Le Gallienne.

Through the gift of a Victrola from Mrs. Burroughs to Julian, father and son came under the spell of music that season as never before.

> It is a great acquisition, and brings the great singers and players to our own fireside. You must come and hear it. Julian has a passion for operatic music. How curious! as he has no musical education. . . . I am moved more by the simple folk-songs and ballads, though the voice of Caruso thrills me. . . .

On learning of Roosevelt's proposed trip to Africa, Oom John wrote him to try while there to settle the point about the honey-guide — whether it really does lead the hunter to stores of wild honey, which he doubted. 'Go in the opposite direction,' he wrote him, 'from that which it seems inclined to take, and see if it will follow you. If not, then follow it, and see what comes of it.' He then added, 'I believe the country is with you in your fight with Congress. . . .' T. R., replying the next day, said he would certainly adopt the interesting suggestion about the honey-bird. He hoped Oom John's prediction about the big-game herds being gone would not prove accurate, as he wanted to get specimens of them for the National Museum. He hardly expected to get a lion and an elephant, but thought he ought to get a rhinoceros, a giraffe, a hippopotamus, and some of the big antelopes.

Oom John was sure T. R. would get one lion, but hoped the elephants would escape. He wanted to hear more about the song-birds of Africa; wanted to know where the swallows nest, if any were there; and if the grouse drum and call as ours do. 'I hope you will be as successful,' he added, 'in the wilds of Africa, as you have been in the wilds of American politics, and make 'em all dance to the same lively tune. You are bound to bag big game wherever you hunt. . . .'

In the latter half of January, he attended lectures at Cornell University — lectures on chickens, on bird coloration,

and on literature; and while there saw much of Mrs. Olive Brown Sarre, Professor Corson, Professor L. H. Bailey and his wife, Miss Elizabeth Haight, Mr. Louis Agassiz Fuertes, and Dr. Andrew D. White, the last 'an attractive man — gentle, wise, and learned.'

CHAPTER XXIV

JOURNEYING WITH MUIR

1909

Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop away like autumn leaves.

JOHN MUIR

WHEN in February, 1909, a generous friend proposed for Mr. Burroughs a trip to California, the latter coquetted with the proposal, until his wife backed out, and his son could not be persuaded to accompany him; then, hanging back himself, he said: 'Why should I, at my age, go about alone, just to see things? I can see the constellations every night from my own doorstep.' His friend had arranged for John Muir to meet Mr. Burroughs in Arizona, and guide him through the Petrified Forests and the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, and although this made the reluctant traveler feel strongly the westward pull, he argued himself out of it, even priding himself on having been able to throw that incubus from his shoulders. Nevertheless, when two of his women friends (Mrs. Maurice C. Ashley and the writer) begged him to reconsider, and let them accompany him, he reversed his decision.

Out of the obscurity, as the train set us down in the darkness at the little desert town of Adamana, a voice called, 'Hello, Johnnie, is that you?' And there under the Big Dipper, the two met for the first time since their Alaskan trip, ten years before.

'Yes, Muir, I'm here, with two women in my wake. Are you surprised?'

'Surprised, mon, that there are only two. There were a dozen or two hovering round in Alaska, tucking him up with rugs, running to him with a flower or a bird-song. Oh, two is a very modest number, Johnnie — but we will worry through with them somehow.' And picking up part of our luggage, the lean, tall, grizzled Scot led the way to the inn.

There in the lamplit sitting-room of the stuffy little inn, we got our first look at the big, simple, companionable John Muir. He had a lonely, far-away look in his blue eyes, except

when hectoring some one, when he looked like a fun-loving boy. We found him the most entertaining and the most indefatigable of talkers; but, wearied with the journey, Mr. Burroughs finally ventured, 'Muir, I'm sleepy — I'll have to go to bed.'

'Sleepy, Johnnie! Why, lad, there'll be time to sleep when you get back to Slabsides, or at least in the grave.'

A glimpse of the weird, desolate region of the petrified trees is had in Mr. Burroughs's Journal for February 26th–27th:

> We descended into the dry river bottom, and after a walk of two or three miles, came to the trunks of the petrified trees lying scattered over the red and gray clay mounds. Everywhere were trunks or fragments of trunks of enormous trees, some broken into fragments, others whole and partly covered by soil. We saw trees one hundred or more feet long, straight as a candle, apparently lying where they had fallen — in many cases the stumps and roots were still visible.
>
> We spent several hours wandering amid these ruins of a foreworld. One could not look without emotion upon these silicified trunks of trees that had been growing millions of years ago.
>
> . . . Some presented a solid, vitreous appearance, with brilliant colors, red, orange, yellow, blue, purple. . . .
>
> Often we found ourselves in a veritable wood-yard, where the trunks were sawed up into stove-lengths, and the ground strewn with chips — a panful of these chips would have deceived the eye of any housewife, but if she should take the pan in her hand, she would be astonished at its weight.

When John o' Birds would ask John o' Mountains what happened in those past ages that made all these mighty trees fall, and why they were preserved in stone, instead of decaying and disappearing as do fallen trees of to-day, the Scot would only retort teasingly, 'Oh, get a primer of geology, Johnnie.' In fact, to direct questions Mr. Muir always showed a perverse disinclination to reply; but let him talk on and on, unmolested, and his hearer was richly rewarded by talk discursive, grave and gay — adventure, anecdote, quotation, scientific data, glowing description, inimitable mimicry.

The soft grays of the desert sands became lavender in the sunset light, as we returned over the trackless sands, while the distant mesas took on the most exquisite gradations of their brilliant earlier hues. One, away on the horizon, crouched sphinx-like upon the barren waste; and over all, one by one, appeared the large few stars.

To see the wonders of the great Southwest in company with these two students of nature, and to study the students while they studied the wonders, was a privilege incalculable. Totally unlike in face and figure, they were equally dissimilar in temperament and character. Both men, at the time, were past threescore and ten; and, serious-minded though they were, had much of the eternal boy in them. They both had a keen sense of humor; were haters of sham and display; were alike lovers of solitude, and of their kind; and were devotees of good literature; and here the resemblance may almost be said to end.

Mr. Muir, 'hopelessly and forever a mountaineer,' drew one by a quality acquired in remote solitude — a pathetic seriousness and a furtiveness like the wild things in nature; yet, in varying moods, he showed the plodding student, the inventor, the practical man, and the mystic.

Mr. Burroughs looked the investigator and the philosopher that he was — one who loved to know, and to know why he knew; who must see things as they are, and then find the poetry and meaning in them, thus seen.

We named them the 'Wanderer,' and the 'Saunterer' — the former needing a continent to roam in, the latter finding inexhaustible interest in the home-acres. While Mr. Muir's love for new scenes was insatiable, a veritable homesickness came over Mr. Burroughs amid alien surroundings, unwonted beauty and grandeur almost failing of their appeal unless to them was added some touch of the familiar. He had loved the Lapland longspur in Alaska because it recalled his boyhood bobolink; Bright Angel Creek, at the Grand Canyon, curiously suggested Montgomery Hollow in the Catskills; while the fertile patches of alfalfa on the Mojave Desert and the robins in Yosemite endeared his wanderings in those alien scenes.

We soon learned how insensible was Mr. Muir to fatigue, how indifferent to food, how independent of sleep — when companionship was to be had; and, on the other hand, how peculiarly dependent upon food and sleep was Mr. Burroughs — not only to do his best work, but also to enjoy anything, or even to maintain amicable relations with others.

On arrival at the Grand Canyon, after a night of travel and fasting and fitful sleep, all excepting Mr. Muir felt the need of

JOHN BURROUGHS AND JOHN MUIR AT THE GRAND CANYON, 1909

refreshing themselves and breakfasting, before taking even a peep at the great rose-purple abyss a few feet from the hotel; but the teasing Scot jeered at us for thinking of eating with that sublime spectacle waiting to be seen. Still, he deigned to breakfast with us, and then, preceding us to the rim of the Canyon, stood in rapt contemplation. As we approached, turning, he waved toward the abyss and said, 'There! Empty your heads of all vanity, and look!' And we looked upon that terrestrial book of revelation — surely the most sublime spectacle the earth has to offer! Vastness, silence, eternal repose — one's very soul bowed before the unearthly beauty and sublimity of it all. Mr. Burroughs gave a hint of the supernal colors when he said of the majestic temples, 'It is as if æons of sunsets had stained them with their expiring splendor.'

The day we made the perilous descent on muleback, four thousand feet down into the Canyon, a part of the trail covered by ice and snow, we caught snatches of geological talk from the 'two Johnnies' riding in the rear.

'Muir, shall we find the Silurian and the Devonian down below?' This, and a tossing about of 'Jurassic,' 'Triassic,' and 'Permian,' of 'strata' and 'taluses' floated down to us, as we desperately trusted to the little mules to carry us round each dangerous curve of the precipitous trail, while cliffs towered above and gulfs yawned below. I have since wondered if their talk was not mostly bluff — as boys whistle in the dark.

Further glimpses are given by Mr. Burroughs in letters to his wife:

> We came here Sunday morning a little the worse for wear. . . . Had you survived to get this far, you would have enjoyed this hotel — everything as neat as a pin, beds luxurious, and the food all one could desire. Muir and I have adjoining rooms with a private bath. All the water used on the place is brought from ninety miles away, and costs about $125 a day.
>
> . . . I am sending you a picture taken of us just as were about to take the plunge down Bright Angel trail on mule-back. . . . The trail, three or four feet wide, zig-zagged down into the awful gulf, and there were places where if the mule had stumbled, or made a misstep, both mule and rider might have gone down 2000 feet. C. B. had never been on a horse's back, and Mrs. A. had only ridden a little in her girlhood. Had I known what was before us, I never would have consented to their making the trip . . . the awful gulfs that constantly opened up below us fairly made our hearts stop. But the mules cautiously picked their way. . . . Doctor quite fell in

love with hers, and thinks of getting a trunk big enough to bring him home with her. . . . It was a day that none of us can ever forget. . . .

The women have both fallen in love with John Muir, and no wonder, for he is very entertaining. . . . He has invited us to visit him in June and go camping with the Sierra Club in Yosemite and the mountains beyond, at his expense. The women want to do it, but I cannot tell yet. . . . Dr. Ashley writes for Mrs. Ashley to keep on to Japan, but that does not enter into my calculations. . . .

I hope soon to reach a place where there won't be so much to see, and plenty of time to rest and dream about what we have seen.

I wish you could have seen what we have, but I seriously doubt if you could have stood the journey. . . .

The last day at the Canyon, as we stood looking into the vast abyss and feeling anew the blessings we had shared, I said to my companion, 'To think of our having the Grand Canyon, and John Burroughs and John Muir thrown in!'

'I wish Muir *was* thrown in sometimes,' retorted Mr. Burroughs, who had overheard — 'when he gets between me and the Canyon.'

After leaving the Mojave Desert, we parted company with Mr. Muir for a time, he going north to Martinez and we to Riverside.

It was nearing sunset as the bells in the tower of the Mission Inn chimed 'Abide with me,' and the automobile, winding under the archway, stopped at the door. An unaccustomed sight met our eyes — the imposing court with long, arched arcades, the palms, pepper-trees, and acacias, the tall poinsettias against the cream-colored walls, the climbing vines, the red Spanish roofs, the gaudy parrots and macaws hopping about, and the low, rambling cloistered architecture redolent of the past.

The chimes were still pealing when nimble pages appeared and took possession of our luggage. Just as I was stepping down from the car, a small wicker suitcase sprang open, and out upon the stones of that elegant court, under the flower-hung pergolas, flew brush and comb, soap-box, night clothes and kimono, and — oh, unkind Fate! — a shabby silver knife and fork, a drinking-cup, a salt-cellar, and a jar of Dundee marmalade! — these last incongruous articles having been chucked in hastily that morning, salvaged from our desert luncheon of the day before. The old cutlery, given us at the

Canyon, we had thought to keep for other picnics; and Mr. Muir had insisted on our saving the marmalade. But how explain this to the polite pages, one of whom composedly gathered up the motley array and struggled manfully with the capricious clasp? Seizing the offender, and making it my special charge thereafter, I joined my companions in the laugh at my expense, as, thus announced, we made our triumphal entry to the Mission Inn.

A unique hostelry — the hospitable spirit of the old missions pervaded the place, while present-day needs were abundantly met. The chief clerk was a botanist, the head-waiter a poet, and even the women who shampooed one's hair discussed the works of Burroughs and Muir, and gave a digest of van Dyke's book on the Desert. The menus, exemplifying that man cannot live by bread alone, had daily quotations, during our ten days' stay, from Burroughs and Muir.

To his son Mr. Burroughs wrote of the new scenes:

> These valleys are almost level plains and eight or ten miles broad. With their symmetrical plantings and high culture, and their lofty encircling mountains, they have a very stately effect. . . . We drove through Smiley Heights — a large park, miles in extent, commanding noble views of mountains and plain. We were very hospitably received by the Smileys. They look well and hearty. . . . Mrs. Daniel Smiley wished especially to be remembered to your mother. . . .

In mid-March, he tells Mrs. Burroughs of the housekeeping in Pasadena:

> It is a delightful little house of six rooms and a bath. . . . Mrs. Ashley is delighted to find a sewing-machine here. Hot and cold water, gas, and electricity, and all as neat as a whistle. It would do you good to be here and see how neat and complete everything is. We enjoy the taste of real home life it gives us. I sleep downstairs, and try to get up and get breakfast started, but Mrs. A. got ahead of me this morning. We pay at the rate of fifty dollars a month. . . . At the Mira Monte we should have had to pay fourteen dollars a week apiece. By the present arrangement we think we can save ten dollars a week at least, besides having just the food we want when we want it. . . .
>
> Mr. [Francis Fisher] Browne of Chicago, editor of The Dial, has just called and proposes to take us on a trip to the mountains soon. . . . The women are still anxious to go to Honolulu. . . . If I keep well, I may go with them. Muir talks of going. . . .

One evening when a men's club in Pasadena was giving a

dinner in his honor, Mr. Burroughs came away before the dinner was served, and, when rallied about it, said, 'Well, I shook hands all around, and sat awhile, but I couldn't stay to eat their dinner at that hour. I should have lost my sleep, and my forenoon's work to-morrow.' So, munching a few 'uncooked wafers,' and drinking a cup of hot water, he went to bed at the seasonable hour of nine.

'Johnnie, how many uncooked wafers can you eat with impunity?' teased Mr. Muir, on one occasion.

'About eight, I think.'

Some days later, when Mr. Muir heard him say he had not slept well — must have eaten something that disagreed with him — he rallied him:

'Overate, did ye, Johnnie? Ye must have fairly gorged yourself — now how many wafers did you eat, do you suppose?'

'I ate twelve, Muir, if you must know.'

'Hm! Twelve — well, that *is* over *eight*, isn't it?'

One forenoon, as we sat around the table in the Pasadena cottage, Mr. Burroughs writing on his Canyon article (which he had named 'The Divine Abyss'), he broke out with: 'Girls, how does this strike you. Does it hit the mark at all?' And he read a paragraph he had just written which described the tranquillity and unearthly beauty of the Canyon. A little later, again pausing and looking up with corrugated brow, he seemed to be wrestling with a profound thought, or weighing some nicety of expression. He started to speak, hesitated, then queried, concernedly, '*Couldn't we warm up those Saratoga chips for luncheon?*' After that, whenever he mentioned the Divine Abyss, we asked him which one he meant — the one in Arizona, or the one in the epigastric region. So many times were those chips warmed over for him, he declared in desperation he would have a Saratoga chip emblazoned on his escutcheon.

Excerpts from notes dictated of a Sunday in late April, while sitting on a boulder-strewn hill above Santa Barbara, give glimpses of the Western birds:

> The song of the meadow-lark, indescribably sweet and liquid comes up from the slopes below. . . . The only bird we hear in the East whose song has [this] liquid bubbling character, is the bobolink; but the lark's is really more a part of the hills and meadows than is

JOHN MUIR AND JOHN BURROUGHS IN PASADENA, 1909

the bobolink's. It is a less self-conscious song; less expressive of parade and hilarity, and abandon. This expresses joy and contentment. . . . The meadow-lark just came and alighted on a tree near us, then, flew up in the air, and in a hovering flight, sang almost the same way our meadow-lark sings on the wing — a song entirely different from its ordinary note. The wing-song seems really more like a song than the rest-song, which is more like a musical call, four or five notes; the wing-song is a rapid, ecstatic burst, not especially melodious, but very lark-like.

In the valley below we heard the black-headed grosbeak, whose song is almost identical with that of our rose-breasted. On our way up we heard the spurred towhee mew very like a catbird, which confirms what Roosevelt told me. Bradford Torrey thinks it is a contented sound. Coming up from the canyon below we detect distinctly the song of the wren-tit, *pip, pip, pippy, pip, pip.* In the calm air over a broad meadow expanse I see six buzzards sailing round in the leisurely way that buzzards alone seem to have. . . . The breasts of the rounded hills across the canyon are yellow with mustard. . . .

When approaching the gateway to Yosemite Valley, Mr. Muir, rehearsing early experiences during his 'five glorious winters there,' told of his wanderings and his studies:

I would lie down where night overtook me; the flowers arched over me; the sky was my roof; and when I awoke, I could begin botanizing before breakfast. I always had a passion for the flowers. In college they nicknamed me 'Botany.' Oh, but that was living! the air was delicious — sweet as the breath of angels!

The Wanderer had a keen capacity for friendship, and during his lonely years in the High Sierra came down from the snow-line to the 'bread-line,' quite as often for the nourishment in letters from friends as to replenish his bread-sack and tea-can. His friends protested at his seemingly reckless and solitary life, but he laughed at their fears, and begged them, since the ravens would not feed him, to find him some concentrated food, so he could carry a year's provisions and pursue his studies uninterruptedly. Years later, when his anxious wife would caution him, lest he contract pneumonia and die alone in those inaccessible heights, he would ask, 'And where could one find a more glorious place to die?' But, on seeing that he had gone too far, penitent, he would say reassuringly: 'Why, my dear, it is you who are in danger — breathing the dust of civilization. There isn't a sneeze in the whole Sierra.'

When, on approaching Yosemite, we came in sight of mighty

El Capitan, Mr. Muir called out, 'How does that compare with Esopus Valley, Johnnie?'

And 'Johnnie's' reverent amazement as we entered the deep-walled enclosure was enough to satisfy even John Muir, so that for a few days the Scot almost ceased his bantering.

On his first view of Yosemite Falls, as he stood and looked up at that vast body of water, which in a series of three leaps has a fall of half a mile, Mr. Burroughs exclaimed under his breath, 'Great God Almighty!' Another time, after contemplating it long in reverent wonder, as he turned away he said musingly, 'A liquid harp, humming for ever and ever.'

Once when Mr. Burroughs asked some question about the redwoods, Mr. Muir replied, characteristically:

'I thought I had beaten that into your noddle long ago, Johnnie.'

'Well, beat again, Muir, my head is pretty thick, you know.' And with a twinkle in his eye he listened to the Scot's painstaking explanation of *Sequoia sempervirens* and *Sequoia gigantea* and their distribution.

Mr. Muir had great difficulty in persuading Mr. Burroughs that glaciation had played so large a part in the formation of the valley as he ascribed to it, and many a tilt they had on the subject. One day, when journeying toward Half Dome, as Mr. Muir was telling that the glaciers had probably worn off a half-mile at least from the top, and then sawed right down through the Valley, turning, he asked, 'How is that for a piece of work, Johnnie?'

'Oh, Lord, that's too much, Muir!' And later: 'It sticks in my crop — Muir's theory that ice alone accounts for this great Valley being cut out of the solid rock.' But whenever he protested to the Scot, he got no satisfaction. If Mr. Muir would evidence this and this as proof, his questioner would urge, 'But, Muir, the millions of years before the Ice Age — what was going on here *then?*' And Mr. Muir would only answer, characteristically, 'Oh, God knows — but, Johnnie, I've found slate fragments on the top of Half Dome.'

On the second day in Yosemite, when some one was lamenting that we could not see the giant sequoias, nor climb to Glacier Point, Mr. Muir retorted: 'Yes, I puttered around here for ten years, but you expect to see and do everything in four days! You come in here, then excuse yourselves to God,

who has kept these glories waiting for you, by saying, "I've got to get back to Slabsides," or, "We want to go to Honolulu."'

After his rather exciting weeks in California, it was a great relief to Mr. Burroughs to sit idly on deck for five days in early May and watch the indigo waves — no engagements to keep except with the skimming albatrosses. Impressions of the new scenes are found in letters to his son:

May 7. I am writing from the wilderness of the Pacific, about 500 miles on our way to Honolulu. . . . The Mongolia is a big ship — 615 long, 65 feet beam, and 27,000 tons. . . .

My roommate is a colonel of the U.S.A., going to Yokohama, a large, kindly man, neat and punctilious in person and habits. . . .

We are looked after by Dr. William Hobdy, in U.S. Quarantine service, a young man and very companionable. . . .

. . . We have had a pretty strenuous time so far, and I'm hoping for a let-up. There is a pleasure in making new friends, but everything has its price. . . . Then, you know, I am more or less of a hermit, and even the friends I like come between me and the things I'm most intent upon. . . .

May 10. . . . 300 miles from Honolulu. We have reached summer heat, and the officers are blossoming out in white suits. . . . Flying-fish begin to appear, and the sea has that tinge of purple that we saw about Jamaica. The albatrosses follow the ship, their long thin wings cutting the air like blades. I have never seen any bird fly with so little effort. They stretch their wings and away they go forever and ever.

All the crew are Chinese, the waiters dress in their long blue shirts with their black braids hanging down their backs. C. B. is as much in love with our waiter, Tong Koa, as she was with her mule, Sandy. . . . They make admirable waiters, — so quiet, so quick to respond.

On a placid sea, in the early dawn, the boat slowly sailed toward shore through the many-hued waters; the long line of mountains, ghostly and dim, were later wreathed in scarfs and veils of rose and gray and amethyst. Finally Honolulu with her seaward-leaning palms, and the motley crowd on the wharf, waiting with their many-colored *leis* for the voyagers; then the tender strains of 'Aloha' as friend greeted friend.

What gorgeous, unbelievable splashes of color everywhere in flowering shrubs and vines! the Golden Shower, the *Poinciana regia*, the many-hued hibisci, and oleanders, the scarlet papery flowers of the bougainvillea, and the screaming magenta variety! The stately royal palms, the ragged, disreput-

able-looking cocoanut palms, the date palms, fan palms, travelers' palms, tattered banana-trees, spreading banyans, scraggly algarobas, with their long, yellow, caterpillar-like blossoms — how gay, how novel, how altogether friendly this island upon which we landed that bright May morning!

One of the first things Mr. Burroughs did, that first day, was to call at the steamship company's office to try to secure staterooms for return on May 25th, a distinct cloud resting upon his spirits at the uncertainty of accommodations before June 8th. He felt so far from home, and the strange face that Nature turned toward him only increased his loneliness. For a little it was as in his childhood when, straying from the door-yard to the 'Deacon road,' he looked back, and, seeing how far he had gone, weeping, ran home as fast as he could. These islands, as he steamed toward them, had seemed to him on the rim of the world, looking out and down across the watery waste toward Asia and Australia. As only the sensitive, imaginative person can feel it, he felt the immense distance from home, and his concern as to the return voyage was all of a piece with the affright of that homesick child on the Deacon road. But, as he wrote in 'Holidays in Hawaii' ('Time and Change'), though he had gone to the far islands reluctantly, he soon tarried there joyfully.

To Julian, on May 20th:

> . . . To-day we bathed in this blue and purple sea, the water the temperature we found in Jamaica. The novel part was our ride in the surf canoe, paddled by two strapping black natives. The canoes are dug-outs, about twenty feet long, kept upright by an out-rigger that bears upon the water about ten feet to one side, so capsizing is out of the question.
>
> The men row out toward the breakers, a hundred rods or so, then pointing the boat toward shore, paddle till they see a big swell coming, when we each seize a paddle and work with all our might to get under good headway. The wave strikes us and holds us on its crest, shooting us toward the shore like an arrow — a new sensation and very exhilarating. The women screamed with delight. The spray flies, the waters leap about you, yet no drop enters the boat. You are coasting on the sea, and you pray for the sensation to continue. But, the breaker slips from under you, and goes foaming to the shore. And then you repeat it again and again. . . .

The first bird to attract Mr. Burroughs's attention in Honolulu was the ubiquitous mynah-bird, a showy starling

from India, harsh of voice, restless and ungraceful, as, strutting about, it jerked its head back and forth. He did not cotton to it in the least, but his 'own' came to him in the rich whistle of the Oahu thrush singing in the lantana tangles, and reminding him of the brown thrasher in the home pastures.

Writing his son of the trip to Haleakala, Mr. Burroughs told of the tarrying overnight in the home of the Aikens, fifteen miles up on the great mountain, driving eight miles farther the next day to a cottage still higher, where, after resting for luncheon, the party set out on muleback for the summit, nine miles farther and ten thousand feet above the level of the sea:

> The ascent is very gradual over a vast grassy expanse, where great herds of cattle graze, and innumerable skylarks soar and sing. . . . At an altitude of about seven thousand feet the grass began to disappear, and the surface to become rocky and broken, and covered with low shrubby growths. Here we soon entered the clouds. A half hour more took us through them and into the sunshine. . . . We reached the summit before sun-down and gazed down upon that vast sea of clouds, two thousand feet beneath us, on the one hand, and into the vast crater of Haleakala, on the other.
>
> This is the greatest extinct crater in the world. The whole vast top of the mountain has been blown out, leaving an irregularly-shaped pit near two thousand feet deep, and about twenty-five miles around.
>
> As we looked down into it that afternoon, it suggested a burnt out Purgatory. Its colors of brick red, dull plum color, and soot, and its black lava flows, together with its many cones with openings in their tops, made the scene unforgettable. . . . How wild and unfamiliar and elemental it all was! How I wished for you and Emily that you might see something the like of which you have never dreamed. Far down in the crater in the dim light, we saw a band of wild goats clinging to the crags and taluses.
>
> We stood there wrapped in silence till the light was gone and the stars came out. The Southern Cross hung low in the sky over the great abyss.
>
> . . . Mr. Aiken had built a fire in the little stone shanty, while Ogawa prepared supper. . . . We passed the night rolled in blankets on the ground, with our feet towards the fire.
>
> About two in the morning I went outdoors. Such heavenly glory I had never seen before — had never been lifted so near the stars. . . . No wind, no sound. The mighty crater was a gulf of blackness, but the sky blazed with light. At half past four we all went out to see the day dawn, and that scene of elemental grandeur born anew. As the sun rose out of that long high wall of the Pacific, the shadows fled from the huge mountain in the west. . . . We could see many

other islands, and Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea, the two great mountains on Hawaii, probably a hundred miles away.

Of the visit to the active volcano Kilauea, on Hawaii, he wrote his brother Curtis that it realized to the full the hell which had haunted their forefathers. There we looked down two hundred feet into a round lake of boiling, seething lava, covering several acres — well named 'The House of Everlasting Fire.' Its huge molten waves would dash against the sides of the crater, breaking with a surf-like roar, then ebbing in leaden masses, to become merged in the ever-changing bottomless abyss — surely the most weird and spectacular scene this globe can offer. Mr. Burroughs soon wearied of 'the infernal dazzle,' and gladly left the lurid scene to return to the Volcano House.

A welcome rain beat against our scorched faces as the mules slowly picked their way over the uneven lava; but soon the moon came out and shone down upon the winding train, and the light from the great pit of fire, the silhouettes of beasts and riders, and high over all the moon serenely sailing, made a picture to go with one all his days.

Back to the Coast, before starting homeward, we spent one day in the Alhambra Valley with Mr. Muir. He had much to ask 'Johnnie' about the fauna and flora and geology of the Islands, and apparently regretted, as much as did we, his inability to accompany us. He showed us models of some of his early inventions; and literally barrels of notes of his wandering years and his Sierra studies and drawings — grist which Mr. Burroughs urged him to work up into loaves, and which he did in subsequent years.

The last view of him was as he turned, after saying goodbye, near the home of his daughter Wanda, and walked slowly down the road, with bent head and arms behind him, back to his big, lonely house. We were glad he was going to the High Sierra soon. He needed no pity when alone in the mountains.

Twice while on the Western journey Mr. Burroughs had been proffered honors from two universities, but had declined them chiefly on the ground that he was not a scholar, and not entitled to academic honors. Still, he had seemed a little in-

clined to accept the degree from Yale, but for the fact that to go East to receive it would have necessitated abandoning the plan of stopping in Iowa to see an old schooolmate. Later, when some one said it was a pity he had not gone on and taken the degree at Yale, he rejoined, with the air of a willful boy, 'But I wanted to stop and see Sandy Smith.' That settled it; but was ever a university degree declined for such a reason? (And he failed to see Sandy, after all.)

A letter from Mr. Muir came in August as a finale to the journeyings:

DEAR DOCTOR BARRUS,

I have just returned from the Sierra Club outing. . . . What a fine, telling trip you three had, though I am sure it might have been still better, had you let me plan it. Had you been with us all July, you would have seen the grand Hetch Hetchy and the Yosemite also, and the Merced Canyon and lakes and glaciers, as well as those of the Tuolumne; and fine views of all the forest zones from giant sequoias to the summit dwarfs . . . and really got acquainted with a lot of capital mountaineers.

I was particularly disappointed not having you three at the ranch for a quiet visit, instead of an automobile rush, . . . and with a mixed company. . . .

From Riverby, John o' Birds wrote to John o' Mountains:

I suppose you are back home long ere this from the camping-trip to your beloved mountains. . . . Would I could have made it with you! I hope I may sometime — if not in the California Sierras, then in the Sierras of Paradise. . . .

Such a trip, to such lands and people rather takes the taste out of one's mouth for the home country. . . . I expect it will be several months yet before I can again feel at ease in my old shoes. I have not the little Doctor to write my letters for me and spur me up, and that is a great loss. My hand is stiff and I write with difficulty, else I should have written you before and tried to thank you for all your kindness to us. You contributed greatly to the success of our trip, and I know the 'fun' you had out of me was a very inadequate return. But we shall treasure it all in our hearts, and associate you with some of the great moments of our lives. . . .

I have sent off my paper on the Grand Canyon to the Century, and have nearly finished a short sketch of Yosemite. Don't wrinkle your nose now. I am only trying to give my readers the impression those grand scenes made upon me. I have at least one advantage over you in the matter: these scenes have become almost a commonplace to you, while we saw them with fresh, wondering eyes. . . .

Are you making headway with your writing? The world wants all that harvest of yours thrashed out and made up into crisp, sweet loaves, such as you know how to make.

I salute you in love and comradeship.

Echoes from the lotus-eating days in Hawaii came in rhymes which Mr. Burroughs wrote to ease his homesickness for those happy isles. He laughed at himself for succumbing to their witchery as soon as he was away from them, when, while thinking he was marooned there, he had 'puckered so' to get away. 'The rhymes are faulty enough,' he wrote, 'but you can supply the beauty and charm from memory, as I do.' And he wrote of sometimes so longing for the islands that he would get out his little geography and history of Hawaii and 'moon over them,' absurdly getting some comfort just in saying aloud the 'vowel-choked names.' Verily, like Thoreau, he climbed his mountains after reaching home.

A few of the stanzas are given here:

Fair Honolulu, crater-crowned,
Dear Honolulu, where we found
  Warm human hearts and welcome true
That made thy lava sacred ground.
. . . . . .

O, land of mango, cane, and poi,
Papaya's gold — the traveler's joy —
  Of candle-nut, and lily taro —
I love thy skies without alloy!

I hear the mynah in my dreams,
And pensive sound his strident screams;
  While on the slopes the larks still sing
As sang they where the Avon gleams.
. . . . . .

How swiftly sped the joyous days
On breezy heights, by purple bays,
  When you and I were *molihinis*,
In lands my verse delights to praise!
. . . . . .

Aloha! then, and may we meet
Again in lands so fair and sweet,
  Above Manoa's charmèd vales,
Or in Palola's green retreat.

CHAPTER XXV

COUNTRY DAYS AND WAYS

1909–1910

A broad margin of leisure is as beautiful in a man's life as in a book.
THOREAU

BACK in the old paths, the home-lover mused over all that his journeyings had brought, pursued the new lines of thought and study they suggested, and reveled in the days with their broad spaces, the stillness and roominess of the hours.

In late July comes a momentous letter:

I have some good news which I must hasten to tell you: I have a grandson at last! one of these get-there boys that got here three weeks ahead of time. . . . He was only twenty minutes in getting into the world, and his hue and cry filled the house. . . . I am anxious to see him and bid him All Hail!

. . . Clifton Johnson came Saturday morning. He is getting photographs for a volume to be made up from my books, and to be called 'In the Catskills' — a companion volume to 'A Year in the Fields.'

After seeing his grandson he wrote:

Betty and Ursie said they did not want the baby if it was a boy — they would give it to Mrs. Goodrich; but one day when Mrs. G. drove over and said she had come for the Baby, they both sat up and looked scared. Ursie found her tongue first and said, 'Oh — it's only just a little baby now, and we don't know yet whether it will be a boy or a girl!'

Mrs. B. is a different person today, and says she will go out home with me next week. She is reading the Life of Moody. That has wrought the change. I wish I had a car-load of such lives! I ate supper with her here, and shall take dinner here tomorrow.

On hearing of the death of E. H. Harriman he wrote:

I heave a sigh, many of them, over Harriman. He was a great man — as great as Napoleon — in his field.

And then:

The North Pole has not stirred me up much, though of course I am interested. I believed in Cook till yesterday; now I suspect he is

a fraud. Peary's story leaves no doubt. Why could not Cook tell as straight a one? Why did he leave his proof behind? Ah, it all looks suspicious!

That autumn, when in a discouraged mood, and crowded with professional duties which precluded work in other directions, I had written Mr. Burroughs that I could probably never write a worthy Life of him, he replied:

Your reactions are too violent. I am sorry you are so made, but that does not help matters. You bound from one extreme to another. I think your decision about the Letters [a projected book — Letters of Travel] is wise. Wait and see. Take time. Let the fruit ripen. . . . But you are wrong about the Biography. I have never doubted your ability to do it acceptably. . . . Your heart would be in it, I hope, and you would take your time. Then I hope to see a part of it. Also to have Julian take a hand in, or at least criticize it. I could help you much with it.

Of course you would not make a great book, as you have not a great subject. I have been too much in the background of the life of my times, for you or any one to make a striking book about me; but you could make a sympathetic and interesting volume, and I hope you will go ahead with it. I will be frank with you and tell you where you fail. But cheer up! do make the blue devils get behind you. Your qualms . . . are absurd. . . . Don't go back on yourself in that way. Treat yourself justly, as you would another. We all have our periods of depression, but must not let them master us long.

He writes on October 20th:

I have had the luck to find Muir's Sierra studies (1874) in the Overland Monthly. . . . They are real studies and worthy of preservation in book form. Muir's humor crops out here and there — the Muir we know. Their thoroughness, and their searching logic surprise me; but he rides his ice hobby till the tongue of the poor beast hangs out and he is ready to lie down and give up the ghost. It is like the work of a great detective working up an obscure case. It has modified some of my own views, and I have re-written the last part of my paper, and will send it to you to copy after a while. I think I will write Muir and state my objection to his views.

Later:

I am sending you the Yosemite article to copy and criticize. I wrote Muir yesterday asking him if I might send it to him for him to sit down upon and grind under his heel, if he felt so inclined.

[Journal] November 13. Pleasant day: 33 Vassar girls at Slabsides.

14. Cloudy. Poultney Bigelow and Commodore Higginson today. They sit on the floor in the corner of my Study window [at Riverby] and eat their lunch of milk-toast which they prepared over my fire, and make believe they are camping out.

19. Am much shocked this morning at news of Gilder's death, which occurred yesterday of heart disease. An old and true friend of mine . . . a real poet, very delicate and spontaneous. . . .

After attending Mr. Gilder's funeral he wrote:

A large assemblage. Meet many old friends and acquaintances, mostly literary men. Saw Gilder's coffin borne out on the shoulders of four men. A sad day for me.

Staying in the city over Sunday, he wrote of the friends he met:

Mr. Howells and James Lane Allen call upon me Sunday afternoon. Howells looks well, but his head begins to settle down between his shoulders like an old man. Allen large, straight, and dignified, with almost a military air. Rouland brought out Garland's portrait which he had recently painted. 'Yes,' said Howells, 'that is Garland — Garland overtaken by civilization.' Ruth McEnery Stuart also called. A very bright woman. Such people cultivate their wit all the time — they ought to be bright. The chief end of man, to them, is to be witty. (We who have no wit avenge ourselves by such remarks.)

On receipt of Mr. Burroughs's letter asking permission to send on his Yosemite paper for criticism, Mr. Muir replied:

It's always pure pleasure to hear from you. Send on your Yosemite article and I'll gladly read it and give anything I have that may seem worth while as suggestions.

As to the origin of the Valley, you do well to remain unconvinced, since you have not studied it, — only glanced at it. Your impressions of its beauty and grandeur and worth to our dollar-seeking, dollar-sick nation should, I think, be your main object.

After reading the Yosemite paper, Mr. Muir wrote its author:

I have read your Yosemite Ms. and can make nothing of it. You saw so little of the Valley, I think you had better say little or nothing of its origin. Leave it all out is my advice. It can do no good to yourself or others to try to tell what you have had no chance to know.

Compare this haphazard brazen ignorance with the careful, loving,

life-long bird studies that have made you famous. You must be growing daft. You say, 'Come study the geology of the Catskills — those Devonian rocks.' Could I do it in a day,[1] as you did Yosemite, I would come flying.

Your impressions of the Valley as scenery everybody will enjoy reading, without any blurring origin stuff.

To this Mr. Burroughs replied:

You did sit down on my Yosemite paper with a vengeance. Such wholesale condemnation is apt to defeat itself, and I suspect it will in this case. I should like to have had a 'bill of particulars,' but I might have known I would not get such from you. Did you ever agree with any man upon any subject whatever? I really think, dear Muir, that your Scotch pig-headedness stands as much in your way in the pursuit of truth, as my 'brazen ignorance' stands in my way.

You did not see the Yosemite formed any more than I did. A great geologic drama was enacted there, and who the star players were we can only infer from our knowledge of their doings elsewhere. I have not always lived in a corner. I remember that I walked on the tails and trails of glaciers with you in Alaska. Did we see there, or can there be found there, rectangular grooves three or four thousand feet deep cut in the granite by ice?

If I were to pronounce judgment upon the flora or fauna, or the mineralogy of Yosemite after a few hours' visit there, I should think myself very presumptuous, and could no doubt be easily convicted of 'haphazard brazen ignorance.' But if a man with eyes in his head could not take in the main geological features of Yosemite in a day or two, he will not in a thousand days.

Just so with my Catskill region. You would not have to ransack all the corners to read correctly the geology of it. You would see at a glance that these are residual mountains, like those we saw in the Grand Canyon, but much older, and carved out of a different rock. I could show you where the glacier has worn and grooved the rocks high up on my native hills. I showed it to the Doctor and her sister two summers ago. But if you were to tell me that all these deep broad valleys were the result of ice erosion, as you probably would, I should laugh at you. Something was doing there before the ice came.

What I should want you to tell me is why the old red sandstone shows there at different levels; why it is exposed on the hill where I used to hoe corn, and, in the valley below is covered by deep layers of the Hamilton flag. Also from what earlier rock the material was eroded that made the Hamilton, etc. Here, you see, my 'brazen ignorance' comes out; but I am willing to confess it. I am pretty sure that if I were to ask you for enlightenment, you would say, with a wrinkled nose, 'O, Johnny, get a primer of geology and study that,' which I would gladly do, if the primer would help me any.

I considered carefully all you had written on Yosemite before fin-

[1] J. B. was five days in Yosemite.

ishing my paper, but your main conclusion was so at variance with the opinions of other geologists, and with common sense, that I could not accept it.

In reply to the above, Mr. Muir wrote, December 14th:

Now, dear Burroughs, don't waste your good nature. I only did as you requested with the Yosemite geology, but you give me no thanks — only the other stuff.

If obstinacy, unyielding as a Yosemite dome, strangely mixed with love of flowery hills and dales, bees and trees, bird song and brook song, is a Scotch characteristic, then you, my dear John, are as Scottish as I am or ever likely to be.

If instead of stubbornly sailing to Hawaiian Moweries and volcanoes you had allowed me to take you to the head fountains of the Merced and Tuolumne on the High Sierra, you would have got plain lessons in ice action and water action, and on the relationship of the great Valley to existing and ancient glaciers, at its head and on either side of it, and to all other features of the landscape in general.

Little is to be gained on such studies in books, and still less in squabbling controversy. Only long plodding observation in the field yields anything worth while, at least to poor dreamy wanderers as dull as I. Earth sculpture, and the life and beauty that go with it, is a noble study, and now that you have got Yosemite on the brain, why not come again? I'd be delighted to have you in spite of your rank Scotch stubbornness; and you might perhaps learn to endure or ignore my glacial behavior and airs. Anyhow, I am with all good wishes for the New Year, faithfully your friend.

I am sad about Gilder. What a loss we have sustained, and all the country. New York seems lonesome to me, now he is gone.

On Christmas morning, commenting on the melting of his own anger on the receipt of the foregoing letter, Mr. Burroughs wrote:

I inclose you Muir's letter which, you see, is all right. Bless him! I shall write him that I love him still. I had a long letter from the U.S. geologist, Willis. It is not very comforting to me, though he by no means thinks me daft about Yosemite. He says the geologists now all think it is the work of erosion, but whether of ice or water he does not make plain. . . . He knows what he is talking about. I can modify my article. I really do not commit myself to any view of the origin of Yosemite. I mainly combat Muir's theory.

A few days later he wrote to Mr. Muir:

I have been under the weather for two or three weeks, both head and gizzard wrong, principally the gizzard, but I am better today

and must sit up to my table to thank you for your last letter. You are a dear anyway, Scotch obstinacy and all, and I love you, tho' at times I want to punch you or thrash the ground with you. But I have my laugh at your expense — when you are not around.

The other day I said to a friend: 'Muir will not agree with you about anything. If you were to say, "Now, Muir, two and two make four, anyway," Muir would reply, "Well, three and two make five, but what of that, Johnny?"' My friend replied, 'That is the Scotch of it.' Well, it is all right. I love the Scotchman too, and I will forgive him all his quips and jibes and fun at my expense if he will come here next year and help me study the geology of my native Catskills, and of the Shawangunk grits at Mohonk.

. . . Remember me to Keith, when you see him, and to Keeler. . . .

The next letter, though not written till March 31st of the following year, is here inserted:

DEAR JOHN MUIR,

I am sure you will be glad to know that I have changed the Yosemite paper — cut out much of the matter that displeased you. I had some correspondence with Willis of the U.S. Geological Survey and got his views and the views of others on the geological history of the great Valley, and changed my article accordingly.

My paper on the Grand Canyon may appear in July Century. Johnson could not stand all the geology, so I cut much of it out. I am to have a paper in the May Atlantic called 'Through the Eyes of the Geologists.' If you should chance to see it I should be glad of any criticism you might make. I will not squeal, sit down upon me never so hard.

I am hoping you will come East this spring or summer and will stop awhile with me at Slabsides. We will make excursions to the Catskills and to the Shawangunk and study the Silurian and Devonian rocks. Maybe Mr. Browne will come. I have written him. If you come we will go to see the Harrimans at their new place. The Osborns, too, would be delighted to see you, as will hundreds of others. We will go and see Roosevelt, too, and get him up here. I had a glimpse of Dr. Barrus yesterday. She was looking fine. Did she write you that she is to have a paper on us two Johnnys in the Century? — more about you than about me. . . .

Affectionately yours

JOHN BURROUGHS

Thus ended the glacial epoch in their friendship — no coldness, no cloud, ever again rested upon the stanch friendship of John o' Birds and John o' Mountains.

At this time, and for a few years thereafter, Mr. and Mrs. Burroughs were helping me to look up a place to buy or build,

along the Hudson, with a view to establishing a home and a small sanitarium. Mr. Burroughs would go to look at a property, see possibilities in it, and wax enthusiastic; but the practical sense and housewifely gumption of Mrs. Burroughs often detected its flaws and disadvantages (though he was by no means unpractical). Again, she would think she had found just the place; and, as to practical matters, conveniences, she usually had; but the house and environs would be so hopelessly ugly and prosaic that it could not be considered. Once it seemed that the quest was ended when a house in their own neighborhood was for sale. An architect had already begun to plan the remodeling the house, when we found that the land on which it was located, being owned by the Holy Cross Monastery, was entailed. The plan of buying an acre of Julian, north of his cottage at Riverby, and there building a bungalow, was held for a time with joyous anticipation; but other developments decreed a long postponement of the sanitarium project.

In the closing weeks of that year, Mr. Burroughs was attacked by a combination of symptoms which, from time to time, overtook him — chills and fever of a mild type, malaise, pain in limbs, and dizziness, accompanied by faulty elimination. After each attack he would say, 'I know what the trouble is now — I will not be caught this way again.' The following Journal entry is characteristic:

> My dizziness, etc., began after a streak of indigestion that followed my visit to Briar Cliff Lodge, where I was guilty of overeating. I gained one pound there in two days. All my troubles of late years, I believe, have come from a morbid condition of the blood, brought on by poor digestion.

Early in the new year, because of one of these febrile attacks, he went to the Battle Creek Sanitarium at Middletown, New York, for the baths and electrical treatments, later boarding in Poughkeepsie with Mrs. Burroughs and busying himself chiefly with writing on geology. His content with the cosmos is set forth in the journal entry for January 18th:

> Joy in the universe, and keen curiosity about it all — that has been my religion. As I grow old, my joy and my interest in it increase. Less and less does the world of men interest me; more and more do my thoughts run to things universal and everlasting.

When sugar weather comes he goes back and forth from Poughkeepsie to West Park for the ever-welcome spring pastime. 'The sap leaps out of the trees,' he writes, 'like blood out of a cut artery.' The hammers of Hud and Ed, making crates, make music to his ears, and in the midst of sap-boiling, he is 'hacking away at the sedimentary rocks.'

Excerpts from three letters which follow well illustrate his solicitude for his friends, and hint at the encouragement and sound advice he gave them:

[*J. B. to M. B. February* 26]

Your letter was a blow I was not prepared for. I knew how frail you looked when I last saw you, and that you needed much open air, but to hear that you are on the verge of a break-down is a great shock to me. I am more grieved than I can tell you. You are a brave little girl to face it all so cheerfully. I shall hope that it is not so bad as you fear, and that I may yet see you at Slabsides, if not this April, then next.

I seriously think it would be better for you to go into the desert than to stay in Pasadena. John Muir's daughter spent three years in the desert at Daggett and is now well and married. Write to Muir; tell him you are my friend, and ask him to direct you where to go. . . . But consult your doctor about the desert plan. . . . Keep up your courage, and live and sleep in the open air. I reach you the helping hand of love.

[*The same to the same. March* 18]

I wish you would write me just what your symptoms are. Do you cough much? any fever or night sweats? are both lungs affected? Tell me all about it. Make a brave fight. Will to get well, and will hard. . . . Do you sleep in the open air? If I could only help you! Maybe the mountains are best for you. Your doctor ought to know.

I am boiling sap and making maple sugar these days. It makes me a boy again. The sparrows sing, the robins call, the bluebirds warble, the white gulls fly up the river above the masses of floating ice, and my heart is glad. I will send you a lump of the sugar. Yesterday it was sap in the tree, dreaming of leaves and blossoms. Today it is sugar crystals. How you would enjoy being here and help[ing] make it! . . . I do not myself care much for the sugar now, the sweet I get is of another kind.

I shall have an article in the May Atlantic called 'Through the Eyes of a Geologist,' and one in McClure's by and by on 'Animal Behavior,' and three in the Century some time.

Mary, do get well. The world is beautiful; life holds many joys for you, among them Slabsides. . . .

[*To the same. March 22*]

I have been reading Dr. Woods Hutchinson's book on 'Preventable Diseases.' He has a chapter on consumption which you should read. According to him, you have four chances in five in your favor — if the disease has been taken in time. Three things you must do: Live and sleep in the open air; take plenty of nourishing food; and rest when the fever is on. Of course you will do these things, and of course you will get well.[1] Settle that in your own mind at once. . . .

[Journal] March 22. It seems as if my whole life here [at Riverby] has been all foreground — no background as my life on the farm had. Julian and his family — how I love them all! My life would be worse than death without them! They fill the foreground, but, oh, for the background of Father and Mother and brothers and sisters, and all the old life on the farm! Is it always so? Can our lives have but one background — that of youth?

My thirty-six years here seem so unimportant. I have simply been away from home on a camping or fishing expedition and must hurry back where my real life is.

How do the doings of Julian and me compare with the doings on the old farm in my youth? They are nothing. Oh, the spell of the Past! I sit here and look across the river to that palace of the multimillionaire with indifference, or contempt. It means nothing to me; but when in the spring, in my boyhood, I used to look across the home valley and see at night the sugar camp-fire of Seymour Older, in the woods on the side of the big mountain, how much that meant to me! How I love to recall it all now! Seymour has been in his grave scores of years, but his camp-fire still shines in my memory. Nothing looms big any more. I am getting to the small end of things.

To another friend (Francis Fisher Browne) whom his California sojourn had yielded him, he wrote on March 31st:

If I should write you as often as I think of you, you would hear from me every day.

This wonderful March weather is like a memory — a memory of our days together in Pasadena. How often I think of that delightful time, and of how much you contributed to our enjoyment.

I saw Dr. B. yesterday for a couple of hours, and how vividly the memory of one year ago came back. Those were days of pure joy, and I never expect to experience their like again. The Doctor came over to look at some real estate in Highland, with a view to starting her sanitarium experiment; but she could not find the ideal spot. Poor thing! Her heart really fails her when she finds herself face to face with her problem. She finds it so hard to break off where she is, and try to establish a home in a new place among strange people.

[1] His little friend is still living on the desert in Southern California.

I have had that experience and know well how painful it is. The Doctor is too sensitive and imaginative to cope with such a problem. I think I shall counsel her to give it up. Such a chance as she missed last spring would be best for her.

I wish you could come and stop a week with me at Slabsides this spring or summer. I believe the change, and the primitive ways at Slabsides would do you lots of good. The Doctor would come over, and maybe I can induce Muir to come. Think it over and force yourself to come. Do not let Chicago kill you.

In reply to an inquiry as to his religious views, he wrote the Reverend E. E. Day, of Cedar Falls, Iowa, in early April:

Thank you for your frank and appreciative letter. If you have read my 'Light of Day' you must know pretty nearly what my attitude of mind is in regard to the question you touch upon. The Century magazine has an article of mine, 'The Gospel of Nature,' which they will print one of these days, and which will throw still more light upon the subject.

If I know myself at all, my books all spring from love — disinterested love of Nature, and love of Nature is love of God, is it not? Only I cannot define God to myself in terms of our human personality, as probably you can. God and Nature are to me inseparable and non-human. If I were to look upon God as a being sitting apart from the universe and governing and directing it, then I should have to charge him with all the suffering and agony and failure that we see about us. God is in his world and in us, because he is one with Nature. In him we live and move and have our being.

I love the God I see about me in nature, though I know he will crush me or devour me if I get in his way. The fatherhood of God is not manifested in Nature, but in man alone. When we read it in Nature, we personify our thoughts.

It is all a deep and dark problem, and the first step in it takes one beyond soundings. So I will pull up my plummet here.

In May, more and more visitors invade his solitude, and then comes a less welcome invader, sciatica. He hastens to the sanitarium at Middletown for treatment. When convalescent, while he was calling on me at the hospital in the same city, there came to me a sudden summons to travel in the West with a semi-invalid. The decision to resign the hospital position was abruptly made. When, two days later, Mr. Burroughs saw the dismantled quarters, he was deeply moved: 'Seventeen years here — and now these desolate rooms! Heart-breaking! How *could* you do it?' Shortly after the uprooting, he wrote with tender wistfulness:

This distance only fills my heart with a vague alarm, poor, blind, unreasoning heart, — and makes it more alert and more aware how much I have grown to depend on you. I must teach it to forget its geography, and to think of you as only just over the hill there in Middletown as of old.

You look out on Puget Sound,
  Puget Sound looks on the sea.
To Hudson's shore my feet are bound,
  But Oh, my heart and thoughts are free!

Ten thousand leagues of hill and plain
  Between my lowly roof and thine
Unroll their tiresome miles in vain,
  (I will have to let you complete the rhyme.)

Your garden, the garden I planted for you, at Slabsides is doing well — peas, onions, beets, lettuce, corn, potatoes. I worked a little in it yesterday, just for the absent one's sake. I told the growing things that she was detained in the Far West, but to go on growing just the same, and to offer themselves up to the fowls of the air, and the wild creatures of the wood for her dear sake.

While visiting the Sandersons at Littleton, Massachusetts, he sees the Trowbridges, and calls on the new editor of the 'Atlantic':

Sedgwick was very enthusiastic over Muir's manuscript of his first summer in the Sierra. . . . Boston made me sad. Over eight years since I've been there. With what emotion I looked up to the windows in Hastings Hall where Julian and Howard Cobb lived so long!

A long letter from Mr. Muir in June, shows that the 'twa Johnnies' were on the best of terms. Concerning the visit to Slabsides, the Wanderer wrote:

It would all be pure pleasure, my dear Johnnie, but work seems to be piling on thicker than ever. I have been hidden down here in Los Angeles more than a month, and with the aid of a good stenographer and typewriter have completed another book — 'My First Summer in the Sierra' — . . . The original notes were written forty-one years ago, when I did not know much about the geology of the Sierra, or about glaciers. Therefore I suppose you will like it better on account of its glacial poverty. . . . You see therefore that there will be little opportunity for going East. I will have to deny myself, and bone down to hard work. . . .

I read your article [1] in the Atlantic Monthly. It was splendidly

[1] 'Through the Eyes of the Geologist.'

written, and no doubt will be enjoyed by a wide circle of readers who are compelled to take their geology at second or third hand.

. . . I want to take a trip to the basin of the Amazon. Now that would be another glorious trip for you, Johnnie. . . . South Africa and Madagascar are also points that I have my eye on, and as I usually reach places I start for, I think probably I may get there. Now, what do you say to that, John? That would be something absolutely new and unslabsidy. You have spent too much time in your Catskills, and could easily rest for a year. We could do the whole thing in one year, or two. Just think of the forests in the basin of the Amazon! . . .

With these few hints I think I had better close, or you will say with that peculiar philosophic smile of yours that I must have gane gite, clean gite.

To an inquiry made by Mr. Joel E. Spingarn, concerning one of Mr. Burroughs's dearly loved haunts, Mr. Burroughs responded:

You are correct in your inference — the spring referred to in my 'Pepacton' is the spring which was then owned by my friend, Myron Benton. I first made the acquaintance of 'Troutbeck' in 1862. It is the most beautiful farm I have ever seen. I congratulate you on owning such a place.

In late June, from New Haven, he wrote:

. . . I did not arrive till six . . . met the people here, and then we went over to President Hadley's home to hear him speak to the old classes as they came, to serenade him — nearly all of them in grotesque costumes.

One of the first persons I was introduced to by Mrs. Hadley was your James J. Hill. He, too, is here for a degree. The first thing he said was, 'We have much in common.' I pricked up my ears, and wondered if he was going to allude to you, and hoped he was, but, no! it was in our love of the wild, etc. I said, 'But you have tamed the wild, and made it grow corn and wheat,' — when we were interrupted and swept apart. I expect to sit on the platform with him today.

Mr. and Mrs. Phelps are very kind to me. I like them both, her especially. They had a fine dinner last night — ten guests, among them my old friend, Professor Lounsbury. . . . Prof. Phelps is to let me wear his cap and gown.

After dinner, Lounsbury, on my mentioning Honolulu, said Governor Frear was here to his class reunion. Hardly had he told me, when three ladies came in, and one of them was Mrs. Frear. How glad I was to see her! . . . How it brought up our delicious days in those blessed isles! . . . She said she had hoped she would see you in New York. When I told her of your change of fortune, she asked

AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY, JANUARY, 1909

AT YALE UNIVERSITY, JUNE, 1910

eagerly if it was the case you missed last year, and when I said, yes, was really delighted, — said she had prayed that the chance might come again. . . .

It is 7.30. . . . Breakfast is at quarter to eight.

I shall be masquerading in that cap and gown by and by. . . .

I shall go to Addie's and rest, and dress for that Roosevelt dinner. . . . The wedding was a fine affair. I had a moment's talk with the Colonel. He looked younger and more vigorous than when I last saw him. He was very cordial and asked me out to Sagamore Hill.

June 23. . . . Well, soon after I wrote you on Wednesday, I put on the cap and gown, had my picture taken by Mrs. Phelps, and soon joined the procession at one of the halls and marched several squares in the heat. President Hadley and ex-president Dwight headed the procession; then came the secretary and treasurer; then myself with a member of the corporation; then J. J. Hill, with a member of the corporation; then Governor Frear (our Frear) of Honolulu; then the other candidates for honorary degrees, etc. We made a fine show. In the great hall when the degrees were conferred we sat on the platform nearly two hours in our heavy robes. I will inclose a diagram of the place and mark where I sat. The degrees of the graduating class were first conferred, then the honorary degrees. Jane Addams, Jas. J. Hill, and I rec'd the most applause. I think Jane got the most. I did not notice so much the applause with which my name was greeted. I was thinking of something else, but they said it was very great. I know it was long and loud as I took my seat.

Professor [Bernadotte] Perrin, the public orator, did his part well. I hope to send you his oration about me. I stood facing him in the center of the platform while it was delivered, and, I know, looked foolish and awkward. Then I turned to President Hadley who simply said, 'Because, in your interpretation of Nature, you have enriched our literature, I confer upon you the degree of Doctor of Letters, and admit you to all its right and privileges.'

Governor Frear, who soon followed, was made Doctor of Laws. I was very glad to see him, as he seemed to be to see me.

The hood they put upon me, blue and white, I keep.

In the great hall where the dinner was served, at one pm, we took off our gowns and sat in our own clothes at a table on a raised platform or gallery, where we looked down upon the great throng of college men. J. J. Hill, who was to speak, sat on Hadley's right. I sat the third seat on his left. Hill's speech was not much. If he had only told us about his own life and experiences, how interesting he might have been! But no. Such men must go far off for something scholarly on such occasions. So he talked about the value of education, and got on John Marshall, etc. I had to cut and run at 3.30 to get a train. I did not see the Vanamees and doubt if they were there. The Logans intercepted me and I had a few minutes with them. . . .

Prof. Phelps was more than kind to me. I like him much. I met Prof. Chittenden, too, and had a talk with him about food, etc. . . .

Julian had arranged with the Victor people for me to have a record of my voice made. So I went to their place Thursday morning and bawled my 'Waiting,' and 'The Return' into the end of a horn. I am sure the record will not sound like me, except the slight hesitations here and there. I was nervous, and in no condition for such a thing.[1]

Of the Roosevelt dinner at Sherry's he wrote in his Journal:

A fine affair, but hot, hot, in my swallow-tail. Roosevelt speaks over half an hour. I leave before the speeches are over. Henry Watterson makes a characteristic speech, a pretty strong man. Peary speaks well, but not wisely, at the last. Back to Dr. Johnson's at 12.

While visiting the Roosevelts at Sagamore Hill he wrote:

. . . I have had a pleasant visit. Two politicians are here also, from Indiana, so I have less of R. than I had hoped for; but he is constantly breaking off talking politics with them to talk birds and nature in Africa with me. I think it annoys the politicians, and they probably wish me out of the way as cordially as I do them.

I have met Kermit for the first time, and like him. . . . Today more politicians are coming — Beveridge from Indiana. I leave at eight to go to Floral Park to see the Childs.

. . . The more I see of Roosevelt, the more I am impressed with him. He is a kind of electric bombshell, if there can be such a thing. All other men seem so woodeny and slow in comparison with him.

A hint of the power of music over him is given in a letter written from Riverby in mid-July:

This morning I went in to Julian's to hear some music. . . . There is a passage in that Anvil Chorus that moves me like great oratory. It begins at the end of the anvil — and then the sudden turn which the theme takes — it is like the passion of a great orator. And that Hawaiian plaint, — with our days on those lovely islands as a background — how it floods my heart with emotion!

Writing from Roxbury in August of the friends staying with him at Woodchuck Lodge, he added:

Mr. [J. H.] Niemeyer is painting me in the old barn and is doing well. I enjoy his company. . . . As a background, he is painting in a glimpse of Montgomery Hollow. I am seated under an oak tree, a branch of which shows over my head. . . . I think it shows the man who wrote the books more than ——'s do.

Did you read Bradford Torrey's Yosemite paper? It is good.

[1] He was right. These records are most unsatisfactory — scarcely a vestige of his intonations are to be detected in them. They are painfully inadequate and misrepresentative.

How delightfully he ambles along. Never gets on a canter, or stirs you up, but paces along in a charming way. . . .

In September, from Riverby:

I asked Mrs. Burroughs if she would go to California this winter and take a bungalow, if you could come with us. She smiled, but seemed a little doubtful. I told her what you said about it, — if you did not come East. . . . She is afraid of the journey.

Yesterday Mr. Browne and I went down to Milton to see again the lot I looked at for you last spring, and we are both greatly taken with it. . . . It is in many ways an ideal spot — the best you can get with a river view. I think you could build a good bungalow for $3000, then with Woodchuck Lodge as an alternative in summer, you would be well fixed. . . . Mr. Coffin would sell his own place near by for $10,000, a large fine place in prime order, but I like the other prospect better. I am sure it is the best you can do on the Hudson. . . . Mr. Browne has made a rude map of the place, which I inclose. The village is rather shabby, but they are improving it. Mary Hallock Foote was born here; Gilder and Dr. Holland used to come here; and the artist Innes lived here. Handy to N.Y., and not too far from me and Slabsides.

Commenting on an essay about him which appeared in the November 'Atlantic,' which number celebrated his fifty years as a contributor to that magazine, he wrote:

Your letter returning the Sharp proofs came yesterday. Mr. Browne and I took Sharp to be in earnest about the 'idyllic character' of those extracts from the Hyde book. I wrote Sharp I could see nothing in them. He answered that they were meant to be humorous! Then I saw it, and laughed at my own stupidity; but why should he have dragged them in — and with such a sober face?

Some things he said about Thoreau I did not like. Why compare *me* to the disadvantage of Thoreau? Thoreau is my master in many ways — much nearer the stars than I am — less human, maybe, but more divine — more heroic. . . .

Mrs. B. is well and talking about California. . . . I fear unless you can join us, she will not go . . . but if you have a chance to go to Japan and around the world, it would be sheer selfishness for us to stand in the way. . . . Your life would be the richer for it, and you could make me share it in your letters. But I hope it will be California instead.

November 1. I was shocked to hear of the death of Moody. He wrote a few things that will last as long as anything in our literature; but I don't care for his plays.

[Journal] Nov. 8. Election Day. Vote the Republican ticket on account of Roosevelt, but feel defeat in my bones. He has made his

first grand political mistake. I think he should have kept quiet and let the defeat, which was bound to come, fall upon the Old Guard. Now it falls upon him.

9. The Republican party has suffered a bad knock-out. Serves them right. But the Democrats will be sure to make a mess of it if they come into power. The Democrats are fools, the Republicans are hogs.

Some weeks later he wrote:

I am not worrying over Roosevelt. I think he made a mistake in not speaking out on the Tariff, and in attacking Judge Baldwin of Connecticut; but he will survive. I knew the Democratic tide was coming. I wanted to vote the Democratic ticket myself. Roosevelt stemmed the tide in this state. If this state had shown the same loss in Republican votes that New Jersey, Pa., Connecticut, Mass. and Ohio did, it would have gone Democratic by 300,000. It really went by 66,000; but I am glad there is a turn over in Congress.

In the letter which follows, dated November 15, he discusses his plans for the winter:

My dear Trowbridge,

It was a great pleasure to get your letter. Wife and I had been talking about you and Mrs. Trowbridge but a day or two before, and wondering how you were, and where you were to spend the winter. We have decided to seek a warmer climate. Our first plan was to go to So. California where a friend was to join us in renting a furnished bungalow at Pasadena; but as there is now some doubt about our friend being able to join us, we are thinking of a few weeks in Washington, D.C., and then by February of a trip to Georgia or Florida. Would you and Mrs. Trowbridge care to join us in the California scheme? or would you come to Washington? or go to Florida? . . .[1]

I may come to Cambridge this month or next to visit Prof. Yerkes. If I do, I will see you and talk over our winter plans. . . .

What you said about my Atlantic papers was very pleasant to me to hear. I was sorry to have Sharp disparage Thoreau for my benefit. I may be more human than Thoreau, but he is as certainly more divine. His blade has the better steel and will turn the edge of mine every time, and of Sharp's also. How far off that age of Thoreau and Emerson begins to seem! and how much more to be desired than our noisy newspaper age!

His literary activities are traced in excerpts from a letter of November 21st:

The Atlantic sent back my 'Scientific Faith' and asked for something 'less subjective.' I would send them the 'Intensive Observa-

[1] J. B.'s letters to J. H. T. are kindly lent by Mrs. Trowbridge.

tion' paper, but that has gone to Country Life. I will try to get hold of Symonds's book you spoke of, though his books never help me. I have been reading 'Dreams [?] and Human Life' by a Scotch naturalist, but got little from it. Jastrow's 'Qualities of Men' is a barren book to me also — a book written with the mind merely, no throb or pulse of life in it.

I want to write a piece on 'The Things I have Escaped,' if I get time, and touch upon the things I have missed. I escaped the flood of novels, the daily newspapers, the Sunday School, the cramming method of education, the athletic craze, the wealth craze, etc. etc. Do you think it would be worth while? I have missed meeting a few great men of my time. I have missed a family of children. I have missed seeing Egypt and Greece and Palestine and Italy. . . .

Sedgwick writes me that the Atlantic is to have an article in the January number on the superiority of the laboratory methods of studying animal psychology over the naturalist's methods. This will make me prick up my ears. Maybe my McClure article provoked it. I am ready to be convinced, but am very skeptical. You could not get hold of my real psychology in a laboratory, and I doubt you can of any animal's.

In a December letter he speaks of his old enemy, toxæmia, having again stolen a march upon him. He is 'feeling slimpsy,' and discourses on a 'new nerve and brain food' which he is taking 'with marked benefit.' 'It steadies my nerves, increases my strength, and improves my sleep. My head is as steady now as it was at thirty, and my sleep the best it has been for years. I am convinced my neuritis was the result of starved nerves.' For several years he permitted his name and picture to be attached to this much-advertised product, despite the protests of medical and lay friends. 'You doctors are too touchy about medical ethics,' he would retort. As to its being undignified, he pooh-poohed the charge: 'If it will help others as it has helped me, I am glad to be able to help advertise it.' That some persons actually believed he permitted this advertisement for a money consideration troubled him not at all. In fact, the exploitation of his name and photograph might be going still, but for his learning, during the World War, that the leading stock-holders in the concern were Germans. At this he peremptorily requested the friend who had obtained his consent to use the testimonial to stop all further use of it.

A brief Journal entry on December 30th foreshadows coming events: 'Looks as if we were going to California next week.'

CHAPTER XXVI

UNDER GENIAL SKIES

1911

Southern California, with its leagues of orange groves, its stately plains, its park-like expanses, its bright, clean cities, its picturesque . . . homes, and all looked down upon by the high, deeply sculptured mountains.

BURROUGHS

EARLY in January, Mr. and Mrs. Burroughs started for the Pacific Coast, she with many misgivings as to the long journey, the discomforts of travel, and the dread of meeting new people; he with almost as much dread of the journey, yet with an eagerness to see again that sunny land, and the many friends awaiting him there.

In a letter to his son, written from northern Ohio, he incidentally indicates his own method in studying and writing about natural objects:

I have had a thought about your little sparrow. You might make an article about him and call it 'A Winter Guest.' Watch him closely; see all his little ways and make-shifts to live; find where he passes the night; get on intimate terms with him; cultivate him; put out bread and crumbs for him by your shop door, or on the inside; pound up wheat for him, and spread his table under your window. If he stays, I am sure you can write a delightful little paper about him. Keep a lookout for shrikes.

He looks at the daily panorama through the eyes of the geologist:

January 9. . . . The hundreds of miniature canyons one sees in New Mexico and Arizona — Nature is leading up to the Grand Canyon — making sketches and studies, preparatory to her masterpiece. . . . She is dreaming of canyons all across the continent — the idea takes complete possession of her till she becomes almost a monomaniac on the subject. . . . New Mexico and Arizona had a terrible attack of volcanic hives in recent geologic times. Their surfaces are roughened all over — warty with volcanic scoria. . . .

From the Grand Canyon he writes his son:

The Divine Abyss is as overwhelming as ever. . . . In the afternoon we drive to Hopi Point, Dr. MacDonald, editor of Toronto Globe,

and wife, with us. The view overpowering. Your Ma did not lie down and weep as C. B. did, but she was impressed. . . . The Book of Revelations written in the red Carboniferous sandstone. . . . I find I have not exaggerated its beauty and sublimity and unearthliness in my Century article. No words can measure the reality. . . .

From Los Angeles, on the 13th, came this characteristic greeting from John Muir:

Hello and Hurrah!!!! Welcome to the grand side of the continent!!!!

Mr. Browne is staying in Pasadena. I saw him the other day. He brought the first news of your coming this way with Mrs. Burroughs. Your friends, Colonel and Mrs. Sellers, I see frequently. They are both well and will be glad to see you.

Mr. and Mrs. Hooker told me to convey their compliments to you and Mrs. Burroughs, with a cordial invitation to come to dinner at any time that suits your convenience.

To this Mr. Burroughs replied:

Your 'Hello and Hurrah' sounded good, and made me feel more at home at once. And the invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Hooker hits the right spot. We will gladly accept it by and by. Dr. Barrus is expected here today to stay 2 weeks, and she will want to see you, and I hope you will want to see her. Come over. We have been taken into the home of Mrs. Atkinson and are more than comfortable. . . . Mrs. B. stood the journey well and thinks this is a great country.

Writing in his Journal on January 19th:

Again amid familiar scenes. The great high dark wall of the Sierra Madre — how it moves me!

Hear C. B's voice over the telephone from Los Angeles, after a silence of nine months. Browne meets her, and at three they are at Lamanda Park. I meet them on the walk and throw up my hat. 'Is *that* all you have to throw?' says C. B. How glad I am to see her! How incredible seem the nine months of her absence! She looks much better than when she left in the spring.

Mr. Burroughs's friends could always count on hearty congratulations when he learned of additions to their families. At this time, writing to a distant cousin, he said:

MY DEAR LORA,

Good for you! I am delighted to hear of the arrival of another boy. Now for a girl! I am flattered at your naming the boy after me. . . . He shall have a copy of my next book to cut his teeth on. . . .

His abiding interest in all that concerned his son is shown in the accompanying excerpts:

I like to hear of your reading my books, but I wish you would read Darwin and Wallace, and the great masters of English literature, and of American literature, too.

The better you know the great authors, the better your own work will be. Read Shakespeare by all means, and Byron, and Wordsworth. You feed too much on the current magazines.

Don't be discouraged when your articles come back. Make them better. I always rewrote my rejected articles. I could see their deficiences when they came back with their tails between their legs.

Glimpses of short flittings are found in the Journal:

February 25. Mrs. B., C. B. and I lunch with the artist, Mr. [Oscar] Coast at Hotel Greene, then start for Riverside.

26. We all take a long auto ride in afternoon. A great day at the Mission Inn — Peace Conference. Dr [David Starr] Jordan principal speaker. Pours out a steady torrent for one and one half hours against War. MacDonald throws 'hot bricks,' as he says — a fiery, eloquent speech. Ida Tarbell here. Fairbanks in the evening — a great flourish of platitudes, wind and noise only.

A pleasant incident of his sojourn in Pasadena was the meeting with his old schoolmate Annie Gould Hough, the sister of Jay Gould. In her letter welcoming him, and giving directions how to find her, she said it seemed but yesterday that she and his sister Olly were running to each other's homes to play, and added:

The years that have passed since then have been many, and they have made me an old gray-haired woman. . . . I am afraid you will find it difficult to read my writing, I write looking through a strong magnifying glass held in a shaky hand. . . . Now I 'see through a glass darkly,' but in a little while I shall drop these infirmities and see 'face to face.'

Referring to his call, he wrote in the Journal:

Find her not so much changed as I had feared, 83 years old, but I could see the school-girl of my boyhood. Looks less like the Goulds, and more like the Mores. We talked almost entirely of our school-days. What an opening of the book of the Past it all was!

And to his son:

The last time I had seen her she was a fresh-faced, soft-eyed girl of twenty-one or twenty-two, very pleasing to look upon. Now she

is eighty-three, rather infirm, but with some of her old looks left. . . . It was a sad, sweet pleasure to see her. A note from her this morning asks for the names of my books, and invites us to lunch with her.

In a February letter to Julian he pictures the nature around him.

Far off we can see mountains 10 or 11000 feet high that look like the Old Clump in winter. To take in trees yellow with oranges and snow-capped mountains in the same glance is always a surprise. The hyacinths and jonquils and daisies are in bloom here. The button-balls are just putting out their leaves, and the almonds and peach trees are in bloom. The other day we had a mess of green peas from Mrs. Atkinson's garden. . . .

As I write this, up on a balcony where I sleep, I see a flock of quail feeding about the yard. . . . They all have little top-knots and are very pretty — bluer than our quail. There were 19 of them at first, yesterday I counted only 15, and this morning I have seen only 8. I fear some Mexican wretch is killing them. Their call is entirely unlike that of our quail.

There are swarms of white-crowned sparrows here singing at all hours of the day. I see and hear a few warblers. No crows, but plenty of blackbirds, and now and then a turkey buzzard, and now and then a raven. All night I hear wild ducks and wild geese. . . .

It was very beautiful there [La Jolla], the great blue Pacific filling half the visible world with its long slow breakers breaking on a rocky shore I shall never forget. The rocks are a soft sandstone, and the waves have carved them into all kinds of curious and beautiful forms, and drilled long high caves into the cliffs. C. B. and I wanted to spend much time on the beach, but we could get your Ma out only twice.

One day we drove 18 miles to Point Loma, and had one of the finest views of sea and city and mountains I ever beheld. There were 12 of us. Your Ma did not go. There were two Vassar girls along, one of them had been to Slabsides thirteen years ago.

We went to Riverside on the 25th and stayed four days. . . . Your Ma stood it very well, and C. B. was in her element. The Smileys of Mohonk were there and made us promise to visit them at Redlands this month. . . .

Replying to Julian's news that he found he could compose on the typewriter, his father wrote in a characteristically conservative strain:

I do not favor the typewriter. It would not do for me. The machine would get into the writing. I can only think with a pen in my hand. You can get your manuscript typed for a slight expense. . . . Stick to the ways of your father — unless you get one and Betty or Ursie learns to run it. They are a part of our mechanical age and I

hate 'em. Your writing will lose its freshness and individuality if you compose on a machine. They are for business, and not for literature.

This bit about the bird friends in California is found in the Journal for March 13th:

Clear, calm, much warmer. As I sit here and write [Lamanda Park] I hear the high-hole calling precisely as at home — *wick, wick, wick, wick.* The chatter and giggle and tee-hee of the house finches all about me, many of their notes like those of the English sparrows — the same loquacity, the same busy-bodies. A hummer comes to the roof over me, and to the sides of the house for spiders' webs and lichens, while the rat-colored brown thrasher is digging in the garden with his long hooked beak. This beak is a regular pick-ax. He runs as swift as a squirrel. His song I do not know.

Later he writes his son of further interests and activities:

We had a day on Mt Lowe yesterday — a bright, calm, warm day. At 5500 feet we struck snow and got our feet wet. Your Ma stayed at the hotel [Alpine Tavern] at the end of the Incline, while Mr. Browne and his daughter, Sue, and C. B. and I tramped to the summit — 1000 feet higher, a four mile climb. I led them all. Mr. Browne gave out and had to eat a sandwich, then C. B. tumbled over with dizziness and had to have some coffee, but I was yet fresh and strong. The views were wonderful.

Your Ma enjoyed the day, but was pretty scared going up. She looked and acted as she does during a thunder-storm. You are hung up in space with vast rocky chasms beneath, many times during the trip. . . .

In my Study on the east end of the table is a copy of my essay on 'Scientific Faith.' In it are two written pages. Take them out and send them to me. I am writing another article on Evolution. . . . I also sent Caspar [Whitney] another paper on 'Phases of Animal Life.' . . .

In his Journal at this time, probably with the birds of California in mind, he says: 'I cannot write about the birds till they have entered into my life. I cannot write of anything well till I have lived it.' And a few days later:

I sit here and try to put the call of the quail into words, but cannot. Bird songs and calls have no lingual or labial quality; they are all from the throat. Man alone modifies and stamps these throat sounds with the lips and tongue — hence human speech.

[*J. B. to Mr. Julian B. March* 21]

. . . I have received your two type-written letters. You are doing well with the machine; but don't fancy it will improve your style.

The style is in the man, and not in the ink-bottle, or in the machine. . . . You have a style as distinctly as I have. My vessel draws more water than yours, but yours rides the waves more buoyantly. . . .

Once in commenting on the same subject to Mr. John Shea, he used a different figure: 'My plough goes deeper than Julian's, but his turns a more graceful furrow.' Continuing his letter to his son:

C. B. goes back to the ——'s on Saturday. . . . Tonight Muir and I dine with Roosevelt at the Flemmings and hear his lecture.

I want two cords of wood at Slabsides. I hope Emily and the children are well. I love to see John's tracks in your letters. . . .

In the lecture to which he refers, Roosevelt was introduced by Dr. Scherer, of the Throop Institute of Technology, under whose auspices he spoke. Before beginning to speak of his African travels, however, he paid brief tributes to Throop and to Professor Hale, the astronomer, and then proceeded to enlarge upon the world's need for more men with scientific imaginations, — men who could take the facts of science and write of them with fidelity, yet with such an interpretative and poetic spirit as to make them into literature.

Long before he reached the climax of this passage, his hearers knew what was coming; and when he ended with, 'I mean such men and such writers as John Muir and John Burroughs,' and the storm of applause broke, it was highly interesting to see how differently the two men, sitting side by side, reacted to the tribute. Mr. Muir, who had been sitting straight as an arrow, seemed to sit straighter still, while his head seemed to lift higher and higher as the tribute progressed, and a look of unfeigned joy shone on his face; while the head of Mr. Burroughs drooped lower and lower, and, one knew, however much he wished he could hide it completely, that there were happy tears in his eyes.

The following is his account of climbing Mount Wilson:

. . . The trail leads up the side of a deep canyon where you hear the soft murmur of the lucid water over the granite bed some hundreds of feet below. . . . At the top we found a comfortable inn, and a neat little one-roomed bungalow was assigned to each of us. . . . The astronomers were very cordial and eager to open their doors to us. We went into one telescope (you literally go into it) and they showed us the spectrum of the sun. . . .

At night they took us into the huge steel dome and, with the great sixty-inch lens, let us see the nebulæ in the belt of Orion. . . . I think we shall all see Orion with new eyes hereafter. . . . Through that great slit in the dome, with only the stars visible, we seemed to be voyaging through space in the heavens. We saw the Lord making his suns and worlds. The mighty telescope and the great dome moved at a finger-touch from these men.

Then they took us out on a point where we suddenly saw the sea of lights in the valley below. It was startling and spectacular — a vast sea of diamond spangles on the bosom of the plain. . . . The myriads of electric lights twinkled like stars in a pale phosphorescent sea, with now and then a flash from the trolley lines, like a shooting meteor. . . . Another firmament down there, crowded with stars thicker than the Pleiades and much brighter. There were two large luminous seas — Pasadena and Los Angeles — connected by a narrow strait of light, and many lesser bodies surrounding them and connected with them. . . .

In the morning we sat a long time on Echo Rock and looked into the face of San Antonio with his brood at his feet. . . . One of the astronomers got me a saw, and I cut a fine manzanita crook — the most unique in all the mountains, and brought it away to be used on something for you.

At eleven we started on down the new road which you have seen zigzagging along the mountain side. We had nine and a quarter miles to do. . . . I set the pace. At 12 we were at the Half-way House for lunch. At 2.45 we were down, hot and tired. . . .

. . . The Catalina trip is given up. Mrs. B. does not care to go. You know how little she cares for the sea, or for nature. . . .

I have two titles for my new paper — 'The Tree of Life' and 'Not by his own Efforts' — a sentence from Darwin applied to the rise of man — which shall I take? [1]

He wrote of the Asphalt Lake near Los Angeles:

It is a crowded cemetery — body upon body of extinct animals. A lump of any of the tough tarry mass the size of your head may hold the fragments of the bones of several animals. It is the most valuable deposit of the kind in the world. There are twenty acres of it.

In his Journal, on his seventy-fourth birthday, he noted that he was as well and strong as ten years before, and that his interest in things did not flag. Some weeks before his birthday, in response to a request from the Superintendent of Public Schools in New York City, he had sent a letter to the school-children, which on April 3d was read in every classroom in the

[1] Probably this is the essay ultimately named, 'The Worm Striving to be Man,' in 'Time and Change.'

city — to over six hundred thousand children. An excerpt from this letter [1] follows:

> . . . As the years pass I think my interest in this huge globe upon which we live, and in the life which it holds, deepens. An active interest in life keeps the currents going and keeps them clear. Mountain streams are young streams; they sing and sparkle as they go, and our lives may be the same. With me, the secret of my youth in age is the simple life — simple food, sound sleep, the open air, daily work, kind thoughts, love of nature, and joy and contentment in the world in which I live. No excesses, no alcoholic drinks, no tobacco, no tea or coffee, no stimulants stronger than water and food.
>
> I have had a happy life. I have gathered my grapes with the bloom upon them. May you all do the same.

When the time came to leave California, he confided to his Journal:

> I leave with long, sad thoughts — may never see Pasadena again. . . . Three hundred school children came to the train to sing us off, all bearing flowers. A very pleasant send-off.

Letters from friends in Pasadena described the incident: Mr. and Mrs. Burroughs standing on the rear platform of the train, laden with flowers, and myriads of children, singing and throwing more flowers; in the rear a cordon of waving, cheering adults. Mrs. Burroughs was much impressed by it all. In fact, it was the climax to a succession of delightful experiences since they had left home, which helped her to understand, as perhaps nothing else could, how appreciatively and affectionately her husband was regarded by his readers. The attention, advantages, and honors (not only unsought by him, but often accepted unwillingly) that she saw heaped upon him could not *all* be 'mere palaver.' Almost insensibly, from that time onward, she looked upon his work with more respectful consideration. For this the unspoiled author was amusedly grateful. 'My books couldn't do it,' he said, 'but — well — the fine houses and servants are good for something, after all.'

At home once more, the returned traveler found nothing quite so desirable as to watch the coming of spring. He even turned a deaf ear to salmon-fishing in New Brunswick, preferring to walk with April in the home woods.

[1] The letter is quoted in full in *Our Friend John Burroughs*.

Oh, such arbutus days as we are having! . . .

I am feeling well and the world looks bright — all the brighter because you are down there at the mouth of my river, and not away off on the Columbia. I can float a whole fleet of thoughts and good wishes down to you daily. . . .

I am sending you my bothersome article to type again. I guess I will get to the end of this by and bye. I am like a fish-hawk when it strikes its talons into a big fish and then can't unhook — with this difference: he gets drowned, but I shall keep my head above water, and by and by lift my fish.

Soon the spring influx of visitors sets in. His Journal hints at the things which mark his days:

May 1. Hodge of Worcester and Treadwell of Vassar come to Slabsides. An enjoyable day with them. Hodge very jolly and hearty.

In a May letter he says:

I am writing in an adventurous sort of way — traversing a wilderness of thoughts and impressions, and am not sure where I will come out, but I enjoy it.

There is a mist of green over the woods and splashes of white here and there, made by the shad-blow. I know a partridge nest with nine eggs. Come and see what some dry leaves cover!

Dear Keith! I wish I could believe he is plying his brush in a happier land. He was the kind of man we both love. . . .

CHAPTER XXVII

HOME TO THE MOUNTAINS

1911

Fields where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air; the hills, which he so oft
Had climbed with vigorous steps; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill, or courage, joy or fear;
Which like a book preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered. . . . .
Those fields, those hills — what could they less? had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

WORDSWORTH

'PHILOSOPHERS should always have two or three holes underground against the hounds that run them down,' said Voltaire, when his property was under four governments, and he chose a residence in Switzerland; 'crawling thus from one burrow to another, I escape from kings.' When Mr. Burroughs could no longer escape from his followers, either at Riverby or Slabsides, or wherever he tarried for the winter months, he began, like Voltaire, to cast about for another burrow. This need was, however, but one of the factors entering into the selection of Roxbury for a midsummer home. His insatiable longing for his native hills now caused him to return to them, not for the brief tarryings of the previous years, but to settle down among them for long happy months.

In the autumn of 1910 he set going repairs on the little old gray farmhouse (Woodchuck Lodge) on the east end of the Homestead farm, about a half-mile from the Homestead. While the plans were under way he wrote:

> Those hills comfort me as no other place in the world does. Why should I not spend more of my time there? . . . It is home there, — the only real home I ever had. Elsewhere I have been merely a camper for a night. . . . They are a part of my being. You see I am a real autochthon. These hills fathered and mothered me. I am blood of their blood and bone of their bone, and why should I not go back to them in my last years?

That summer, among many other essays, he wrote 'The

Comfort of the Hills' ('Century Magazine'), later elaborated as 'In the Circuit of the Summer Hills' ('The Summit of the Years'). On the veranda at the Lodge, he penned the lines quoted below, which to read enables one to see the white-haired author seated in his big chair, forever a part of the scene:

> The peace of the hills is about me and upon me; and the leisure of the summer clouds, whose shadows I see slowly drifting across the face of the landscape, is mine. The dissonance and the turbulence and the stench of cities — how far off they seem! the noise and dust, and the acrimony of politics — how completely the hum of the honey-bee, and the twitter of the swallows blot them out!
>
> In the circuit of the hills the days take form and character as they do not . . . in a country of low horizons. . . . The deep, cradle-like valleys, and the long flowing mountain-lines, make a fit receptable for the day's beauty. . . . The valleys are vast blue urns that hold a generous portion of the lucid hours.

Those spring days at the old farm, while the new home was growing, are well pictured in the following letter:

> I am sitting here on the new porch and looking out upon this broad landscape veiled in a soft May haze, where I see the farmers ploughing, the cattle and woodchucks grazing on the fresh springing grass, and where the jocund song of the bobolink comes up from the meadow below me. Chant is hammering away in the house, and the mason is scraping on the plaster. The big porch is a great success. With some screens and burlap curtains it will be just the place to sleep. My Franklin stove is in place in front of the new chimney. . . .
>
> Some day maybe you would like to look at Macy's for bedding — sheets, blankets, etc. Mrs. B. says I will need 4 sheets for each bed, and two cases for each pillow. I shall want at least six single beds.
>
> I have made garden here — peas, corn, carrots. . . . Who will eat them? Maybe the woodchucks, if we don't watch out.

Gay little shopping expeditions followed when he came to New York to select the simple furnishings. His own list showed comparatively few additions by Mrs. Burroughs. Subsequent letters revealed more of the housekeeper's interest than the author's. Mrs. Burroughs had made him four pillows and eight pillow-cases; would I select another sofa-pillow like the others, and send a gallon of floor-oil? He had bought the chairs in Kingston, and Mrs. Burroughs would get the cutlery in Poughkeepsie, and so on. To Julian in late May he writes:

MR. AND MRS. BURROUGHS AT WOODCHUCK LODGE

WOODCHUCK LODGE, ROXBURY, N.Y.

Chant and I are making furniture — two rustic tables, a sideboard, a wash-stand and chiffonier so far. They are a success. I am going to make a big rustic chair. . . .

What I want most nowadays is to be let alone. . . . I dislike to go to Colgate.[1] I wish you were going to your class reunion this year. Why don't you? . . . The old partridge ought to lead off her young today. I hope you have looked after her. . . .

Now the letters tell of his difficulty in getting the right shade — a cool gray-green for the living-room walls, but of success, after much experimenting. One of his grass rugs is too small; he remedies the difficulty by painting an olive-green border on the floor; he hasn't any mirrors yet; phœbe has her nest in the cellar; corn and cucumbers are growing. The work on the house goes merrily on, enlivened by the pursuit of woodchucks, and observations on birds and chipmunks. Such events as the following are noted in the Journal:

Cut ash sticks for rustic table. Helping Chant on the house. Willis Chase digging drains. Quite contented. A mourning ground-warbler singing day after day in the orchard.

A letter of May 28th reads:

I hear the bobolink singing as I write. I have just had my first bath in the new bath-room. I warmed three pails of water on the stove in a short time. Your boxes have come, and my things from Macy's, all but the cots and mattresses. . . .

Later from West Park:

The house will be nearer complete by the 20th [June]. . . . I am eager to get there and settled down for the summer. I am pulled and hauled in many directions now. . . . The ——'s are nagging me to come out to ——, the Smileys want us at Mohonk, but Mrs. B. did not want to go and I said 'no.' Mr. H. wants me to go to London in July, *but I am going to Woodchuck Lodge.*

From Roxbury, June 16th, he writes:

I hope you will get up here in time for strawberries. There are lots of them in the meadow here above the orchard, where Mother and I used to pick berries 65 years ago. About the first money I remember earning, I got for four quarts of berries gathered in that field — 25 cents. How vividly I remember it! I sold them to Elihu Meeker, the carpenter. He was shingling our barn at the time. I can see just

[1] He had consented to go to Colgate University in June and take an honorary degree. .

where he sat on the roof when he made the offer for my pail of berries.

. . . Things will not all be done when you come, but some rooms will be ready. Take your choice. The big front room where your table is, I want you to have. It is very sunny and roomy. The little east room would make you a good den. A window could be cut in the side toward the road. The porch floor has to be painted yet. When I sleep inside, I shall take the little hall-bedroom at the head of the stairs. When Mrs. B. comes, she will take the big room upstairs.

Work your will upon the house. If you prefer the big back room, have that colored and painted to suit you. Chant will do it. Make any changes you want. Ed and Eliza will stay with us till Julian and family come. . . .

I start for Rome in the morning. . . . Colgate the 21st, then on to Rochester. I hope I shall see your Doctor Baker. . . .

Mr. Burroughs had acquiesced as to the degree from Colgate at the earnest solicitation of Mr. Eugene Rowland, an alumnus of Colgate, a brilliant young lawyer of central New York. While he was visiting at Rome, a few days before Commencement, and was being shown about Trenton Falls by the Rowlands, a tragic event occurred. His friend Rowland, who was preceding him along the path, slipped and fell down the rocks into the foaming torrent, and was drowned. The shock and sorrow nearly crushed him for a time. He could write of little else in Journal or letters. With great difficulty he exacted of himself the trip to Colgate, to which he was pledged.

" I am haunted by the thought that I was indirectly the cause of the tragedy [he writes]. My interest in the rocks seems to have diverted his attention, and may have been the cause of his stumbling. . . . The scene is burnt into my brain. . . . Mrs. Rowland and Dorothy fill me with admiration. The picture of Dorothy there on the rocks near the body of her father, on her knees, her hands clasped in silent prayer, and the tears streaming down her face, while they were trying to resuscitate him, I shall never forget. . . .

The degree of Doctor of Humane Letters was conferred upon him by Colgate University, on June 21st; but these and other honorary titles, before and after conferred, meant nothing to him. He abominated being called 'Doctor' Burroughs, and seldom permitted it without protest.

Fortunately the busy days which followed his return to the Lodge, and his joy in a visit from his grandchildren, furnished

wholesome counteracting influences to the recent tragedy. Two young women friends came and pitched their tent in the pasture by his Boyhood Rock, and into their camp-life he entered with zest. Sometimes the dwellers at 'The Sentinel' would leave on his writing-table an invitation for him to sup with them, etched on a fungus, or painted on a flat pasture stone.

It was especially gratifying that the first guest at the Lodge, other than relatives, was Dr. Smith Baker, who, in 1891, through the essay 'Strawberries,' had acquainted me with the works of John Burroughs; and that during his visit we gathered wild strawberries with Mr. Burroughs in the same meadows of which he had written in that delectable essay. On a hot Fourth of July we picnicked in the beechwoods, later seeking a breezy height beyond, where we read aloud, and then discussed, three philosophical essays upon which Mr. Burroughs was at work — 'The Worm Striving to be Man,' 'The Hazards of the Past,' and 'The Phantoms Behind Us.' In their honor we named the place 'Trilogy Knoll.' Never again, however, could it boast so philosophical a gathering; but sometimes thereafter, when Mr. Burroughs would come home with a woodchuck, he would say, 'Ain't he a big fellow? — I got him over on Trilogy Knoll.'

Two important acquisitions came to the Lodge that summer: a new Victrola, and a big oak writing-table which Julian had made for his father. The table was installed in the sunny parlor, which was converted into a study; but with the advent of the grandchildren and others, the sunny room proved less desirable, and he improvised a quieter study in the hay-barn up the road. For the first two years an old dry-goods box, which had been used as a hen-coop, served as a writing-table. Later he made himself a rude table, at which he ever afterwards wrote, despite the anachronous statement of a writer who, visiting him in 1920, described the hen-coop as still on duty. (The writer had evidently seen a photograph of this table; but into innocuous desuetude, if not into kindling-wood, that ancient table had gone nine years before his visit.)

'A Barn-Door Outlook,' 'A Hay-Barn Idyl,' and scores of other essays, then, and in subsequent years, were written in the barn, away from household sounds and chatter, with the wild life ebbing and flowing near. He found the barn a fit

place to thresh out certain dry philosophical subjects, turning them over as he and his brothers used to turn the sheaves of oats and rye with the old hickory flail on that same floor.

After breakfast he would start out with his basket of manuscript, and perhaps a book, in case the mood for writing failed him, and go briskly up to the barn. A hammock swung across one end of the barn, his table, and an old hickory chair completed the furnishing, except for the sweet-smelling carpet of hay, and, as the season advanced, the overflowing hay-mows.

Pedestrians who found their way to the Lodge were cordially welcomed in the afternoon, and tolerated, with as good grace as he could muster, in the forenoon.

One day when walking along 'Hiram's path' in the beechwoods, he called attention to a native orchid, rather rare, which had been growing there close to the path ever since he could remember. He called it the *Platanthera*, but Gray's Botany now calls it *Habenaria orbiculata* — the large round-leaf orchis. His boyhood name for it was 'butter-leaf,' because of the two large shiny leaves (as though buttered) which hug the ground, between which rises the tall flower-stalk strung with greenish-white flowers. He marveled that it had escaped the hoofs of the cattle that browsed in the woods, and barricaded it with strong sticks, lest it come to grief. Never in passing did he fail to pause in homage to the 'stately queen of the beechwoods.' Each year when he returned to the home-farm he sought the plant. 'She is as punctual as the returning birds,' he used to say. Throughout the years the plant throve, he reinforcing the barricade as the sticks decayed. And still it comes back, though he no longer comes to walk in Hiram's path, nor in any other path on the home-farm.

In the long summer evenings at the Lodge, after the vesper sparrow was hushed, the nieces and nephews would sometimes come over the hill from the Old Home and sit on the veranda, listening to the strains of 'Bonny Doon,' 'Sally in our Alley,' and 'The Low Back'd Car' — or other selections on the victrola he thought would please country-folk. Always the little concerts would close with the 'Cradle Song' of Brahms, forevermore associated with nightfall in the circuit of those summer hills.

One afternoon little Elizabeth, his granddaughter, found a vesper sparrow's nest with three eggs in it. And what hushed

ON HIS WAY TO THE HAY-BARN STUDY

THE HAY-BARN STUDY AT ROXBURY, N.Y.

and tender exclamations of delight when 'Baba' showed the children another nest with its three birdlings, all mouth and skin and soft down!

One day, returning from a walk, we were overtaken by a brisk shower (followed by hail-stones, and an electric storm). The elders took refuge in the hay-barn. The little girls, having scampered ahead, reached the Lodge in the nick of time. While storm-stayed in the barn, just as the mother was wondering if her children would be frightened, 'Baba,' peering through the cracks in the barn, murmured solicitously, 'Poor little things! poor little things!'

'Oh, they're all right,' Julian said cheerfully, 'they didn't get wet, and they're never afraid of lightning.' Whereupon it fell out that 'Baba's' solicitude was not for his grandchildren, but for the skinny little sparrows being pelted by the hail-stones in that unprotected nest in the pasture!

When the July meadows were in all their glory, recalling the gorgeous cloth of gold and purple we had seen with Mr. Muir in the San Joaquin Valley a few years before, John o' Birds, looking upon the riot of color, exclaimed petulantly, 'John Muir — confound him! He ought to be here now to see this at its height.' But from Castle Rock, on the Hudson, in mid-July, came a letter from Mr. Muir telling of the many tasks he must finish before he could start for South America. He was in the home of Professor Osborn, he said, 'on the top of a green hill, with hermit thrushes and woodchucks and warm hearts — something like those about yourself'; and must there remain and work till time to sail. He added characteristically, 'As you know, I dislike traveling, but my studies drag me, and I cannot help it, so I have to go on and on — heaven knows where!'

That summer when the Laird of the Lodge brought in his first mess of green peas, he looked over his big family quizzically and said, 'I am wondering how many of you I have got to kill off, to make the peas go round.'

The superb rainbows that spanned the wide valleys that summer stimulated Mr. Burroughs to write of them. A Journal entry, July 15th, somewhat changed, later became 'The Rainbow' ('Country Life'), and still later, 'The Bow in the Clouds' ('The Summit of the Years').

At this time he was writing much about the materialism of

science, the chemico-mechanical conception of life, laboratory experimentation, and animal psychology; sometimes rewriting, sometimes working on new essays, many of which were later incorporated in 'Time and Change,' 'The Summit of the Years,' and still later books. During that summer he first read 'Creative Evolution.' Captivated at once by the beauty and vitality of M. Bergson's style, and by the philosophy which, he said, exhilarated him like a bath in a mountain stream, still he gave many a shake of the head at some of the author's conclusions. He was surprised to find some of his own early ideas, as set forth in 'Expression,' in 1860, enunciated by M. Bergson. With William James, Mr. Burroughs found M. Bergson's page 'like the breath of the morning and the singing of birds.' For John Burroughs, M. Bergson did something of the same shining service that Emerson and Whitman had done earlier in his career, effecting a spiritual illumination and an exaltation that could not, it is true, take the place of positive science, but which, taken with the achievements of science, formed a precious contribution to his ever-growing and expanding conception of the universe. As he himself said, it did for him what Wordsworth did for John Stuart Mill, and Goethe for Carlyle.

For the greater part of the next decade he continued under the spell of Bergson, though never accepting certain of his deductions, as will be found in reading 'A Prophet of the Soul' ('Under the Apple Trees'). Years later, in 'Sundown Papers' ('The Last Harvest'), written during the closing months of his life, his enthusiasm having cooled down, he examined briefly some of what then seemed to him the inconsistencies of M. Bergson, one of which was the contention that the intellect can never grasp the mystery of life; that this can be compassed only by the intuition. Admitting that the heart often knows what the head does not, he still acutely asks, 'But is it not the intellect that *tells us* that this is so? that understands the grounds of our inability?'

Something besides sober philosophy was contributed by M. Bergson that summer of 1911 to the dwellers at Woodchuck Lodge. In reading Bergson's essay, 'The Philosophy of Laughter,' Mr. Burroughs had been arrested by the statement that we laugh at inanimate objects when they behave like human beings — an illustration of which he soon found in

the water-barrel in the back yard, which supplied him with amusement all summer. Happening to wash some apples in this barrel, he noticed how like little people they acted as, moving slowly about in the water, they would line up on one side of the tub, 'like people at a cafeteria'; would hesitate just as they reached the vortex in the water caused by an inflowing jet above the barrel; then, suddenly plunging, would come bobbing up on the other side of the tub, again to take their places in the waiting line, and thus keep up an endless procession.

Mr. Burroughs used to lead callers out to the tub to see the diving apples. Always on seeing that hesitation, followed by the rapid ducking, they would laugh, as they were bound to do. To his question, 'Why do you laugh?' they invariably replied, in effect, 'Why, because they act so human — so like funny little people' — a vindication of M. Bergson's theory that gave Mr. Burroughs unfailing delight.

Dictation of his essays, except a paragraph now and then, never was easy for Mr. Burroughs, but he began, that summer, to dictate a large part of his letters, and kept it up in subsequent years, whenever he and I were in the same household. The disappointment his correspondents must have felt at getting typewritten letters must, however, have been somewhat mitigated when they saw the greater length of those he dictated. His reply to a letter from a lad in Bloomington, Indiana, is one of many letters sent later to that youth.

My dear Young Friend,

. . . I am always glad to hear from farm-boys. I was one myself, and the love of the farm, and of farm people, is deeply rooted in my heart. I see you possess many of the qualities that are fostered by farm life. Some of the best things I see in you are your seriousness and good faith, and your aspirations toward higher things. You evidently look at the life about you, and at nature, with sane and wholesome eyes, and, I believe, are on the right road toward the best they hold.

Your rhymes are, of course, unripe fruit, but the promise is good, and I say, 'Keep on,' though I fancy you will finally put your best thoughts into prose.

Let your reading be only of the best authors — the real classics of all literature, not forgetting the best American authors, such as Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau.

To how many youths and maidens, in their efforts toward

education and self-expression, did John Burroughs send similar letters of encouragement! Honest reaching out to him for help was seldom fruitless. Even the autograph-hunter, whether with obvious or subtly veiled advances, received at his hand far more than his due.

That season a junco of which he has written in 'A Hay-Barn Idyl' ('The Summit of the Years') built its nest in the Hay-Barn Study. He sat there for his portrait to Miss Grace Gassette, the work on the portrait, his own writing, and the little idyl in the haymow progressing simultaneously.

That a man who made no claim to orderliness could write so confidently as he did, in the accompanying letter to his son, proves that in the apparent disarray of his writing-table, or, indeed, of any of his belongings, either at Riverby or at Slabsides, there was more method than met the eye:

> If Mrs. Covert comes up, there are three books I want you to send by her — 'The Animal Mind,' by Miss Washburn, on the north side of the Study, near the chimney, Darwin's 'Descent of Man,' on the east side, and 'The New Knowledge,' by Duncan, on the west side.

Stimulated by a book called 'Clever Hans,' with its account of the phenomenal achievements of a trained horse, Mr. Burroughs wrote an article that season called 'Horse Sense,' in which he further explored the realm of animal psychology. An essay ultimately called 'The Noon of Science' ('The Summit of the Years') occupied him much at that time. He had first called it 'The Chill of Science,' the significant alteration of the title in itself indicating the marked growth of his own attitude toward the subject; for, though at first chilled by certain convictions forced upon him by science, he gradually came to feel light and warmth where at first he had felt their lack. In much of the experimental writing found in the Journal at this period, he seeks to defend physical science against the charge of materialism made by many who would live in the spirit — in which class, with all his scientific ardor, he himself belonged. A great deal of his writing in succeeding years dealt with these themes. Reverencing the truths of science, he freely admitted, even gloried in, the existence of an immaterial world — the world of the subjective and supersensuous — which cannot be captured and demonstrated in scientific terms. He was, in truth, a scientific idealist, and the reader

who follows him closely in his writings of this period, notably 'Time and Change,' 'The Summit of the Years,' 'The Breath of Life,' and 'Under the Apple Trees,' will see that the contradictions in his attitude, which certain critics have seemed to find, are more apparent than real.

In these essays he brings to the so-called material world, and to the so-called spiritual world, a breadth of understanding and a fervid scientific imagination. He makes clear that, though necessarily studied apart, and recognized as diverse, as things subjective and objective must always be, they are inseparably blended, in that they are the combined output of the Creative Energy. He was never weary of pointing out that the Creative Energy is inherent in the soil underfoot, no less than in the stars overhead; that we, the earth-born, are, and always have been, in the heavens, and under celestial laws; that in the endless unfolding and transformations of evolution — in struggle, and travail, and death — there is always new birth, and an upward reach; that man is not a fallen creature, but a creature ever rising higher, as he travels the long road from amœba to man.

And yet, in certain essays, we sometimes find him holding a brief now against science, again for it, in his attempts to reach a position where seemingly opposed views are reconciled in a broad conception of correlated truths. An excerpt from his September Journal illustrates his occupation with these topics, a practical application of which is seen in the succeeding event:

> It is in vain that you tell me the mud upon my shoes is divine — that it is star-dust, and came out of the infinite heavens. It is mud all the same, and I must leave it on the scraper.

The occurrence which had given rise to this reflection was a homely event at the Lodge:

'John, go back and wipe your feet,' Mrs. Burroughs had called, when he had failed to do this to her satisfaction. On obediently stooping and picking up the dried mud of which he stood convicted, he whimsically reminded the accusing Nemesis, 'You ought not to mind a bit of the "divine soil" on your precious floors.'

One day when Mrs. Burroughs complained that the bread we were getting in the village was 'always the same — so

tasteless,' her husband replied, 'Why, it is uniformly good — Mrs. Ward never seems to have trouble with her "emptins." Now, 'Sulie, own up — you would find fault with the Bread of Life because you didn't make it.'

A minute later: 'I know what she wants, Doctor — she wants you to ask her to make a batch of bread. Some home-made bread *would* taste good for a change; but you came up here to rest — you better not tackle the bread.' [But she did.]

Through the comings and goings of many guests, Uncle John, secure in the quiet of the hay-barn, lived for many hours a day the life of the birds and the squirrels, writing of them, and of weightier matters, to his heart's content; but when he was at the house he would lend a hand to fry the bacon, make corn-cakes, broil the chops, or roast the corn.

In those days when automobile rides were something of a rarity to him, his neighbor Miss Helen Gould motored him to Ashland where he had attended school. On the way they called on 'Hi' Bouton, a school-fellow of his and her father's. Strange, indeed, it seemed to be whirled along over roads on which as a boy of eleven, and again in 1854, he had ridden on the high spring-seat of his father's load of butter! And to see 'Hi' again! the lad whose long slate-pencil with its shining copper cap had once been the thing he had most coveted, though never attained!

In the quiet evenings around the Franklin stove, Mr. Burroughs would sometimes read aloud from Wordsworth or Whitman, although to read Whitman long stirred him so he could not sleep. Whenever he would take up his Bergson, the lad (J. W. B.) would sigh.

'Why do you sigh, John?'

'Because I know now you're going to read and talk about things I can't understand.'

'Well, I don't understand it all myself, John.'

When, however, he took up his Dana, the talk was always of things in which young and old delighted, for he linked it all to the geology there on the old farm — to the glacier marks on the rocks up on 'Scotland,' to the old, old fossil plant in the big stone in the foundation of the hay-barn; and to the smoothly eroded hills.

Once on coming into the room when we were reading aloud from one of his own essays, he paused and listened till the

passage was finished, saying with a twinkle, 'Why, that sounds pretty good. What old codger wrote that? Read some more'; and, sitting down, he listened to the end, sometimes interrupting to expand matters touched upon in the essay.

In a letter to Miss Edith Rickert he speaks of a dream then occupying him:

... I am thinking longingly of a trip to Egypt this winter with some friends, but there are several 'buts' in the way, and I don't know whether I shall be able to butt them out of the way. If you have had any experience with the conducted tours to the Orient, give me any points you can as to the best and most economical ones. Do you have any dreams of the Orient? If so, I wish that you might realize them with me and my friends.

To his son, in late September:

I have accomplished more than I usually do in the summer, have finished six essays. . . . I think they will yield me enough to pay for the outlay on this house, and the furnishings. Had I stayed at W. P. I probably should not have written anything. I could not, of course, have accomplished this much without the help of the Doctor and her machine. Some of these essays I have written three times over, before I could get them in shape to suit me, and they have been copied each time, which has enabled me to see their defects. . . .

[He asks for more Victrola records.] You know I especially like the lively things, like 'The Rocky Road to Dublin,' and the plaintive things, like Brahms' Cradle 'Song.' Doctor says the Barcarole from the Contes d'Hoffman is especially fine. You might send me that, and 'Aloha Oe.'

In summing up his summer's work one evening, he pronounced it the most productive year of his life. He recounted the essays he had written, or rewritten, there in the old haybarn: 'Hit and Miss Methods of Nature,' 'Animal Wit Indoors and Out,' 'The Round World,' 'A Pastoral Prospect,' 'The Summit of the Years,' 'Horse Sense,' 'The Rainbow,' 'The Noon of Science,' 'The Phantoms Behind Us,' and much of 'The Comfort of the Hills.'

Quite aside from the amount of work he had done, his home in the mountains had proved a success. Many a time through the autumn days he said, 'I am almost too happy here — the lines have fallen to me in pleasant places.' One evening he

said contentedly: 'A beautiful dream come true! There I stayed for forty years down on the Hudson, and here were my native hills waiting to cradle me as in my youth, and I so slow to return to them!'

In October, alone at the Lodge, he writes of his experiences, concluding:

Shall I call my article that you liked 'My Swan Song,' or 'The Summit of the Years'? . . .

I am sitting here by the table by the open fire, and the house is as still as a chipmunk's den. . . .

I went to Hiram's grave this afternoon and stood there a long time with many long sad thoughts. Eden looks and is well. He will outlive us all, and ten years ago I thought he might die any day. . . .

I appreciate what you say about abandoning the European trip. It is hard to do so, but it may be best. . . . I do want to see Greece and Italy, but I may never get there. It might be well for you to take that trip to Paris. Don't give it up lightly. . . . How does Douglas take the defeat of the Giants? . . .

From West Park, on November 2d, he writes:

Monday we [he and his nephew, John C. Burroughs] drove to Halcott and I visited the graves of Grandfather and Grandmother, after they had lain there fifty-seven years. Also the graves of some of my uncles and aunts. . . . Grandfather died in June and Grandmother in December, 1854. . . . How plainly I could see the little man in his blue coat with brass buttons, with his decidedly Irish features! and the big, or stout woman, too, with her quaint homely ways, illiterate, but very human. She bore ten children that reached manhood, and some of them had ten children. I heard Mother say she visited Grandfather's grave with Grandmother that fall he died, and that when they entered the little enclosure where his body lies, Granny ran to his grave and, calling, 'Edmund, oh, Edmund!' threw herself upon the ground beside it. The moss is on their stones now, and two evergreens wax strong above them. . . .

Everybody's returns poor 'Hans' ['Horse Sense']. Nobody seems to want him. I shall have to turn him out to grass. [The 'Independent' took it later.]

While in and around New York, he writes:

[Journal] Dec. 16. At Dr. Johnson's. Meet Dr. [James] MacDonald again, overflowing with life and Scotch anecdotes. I greeted him with a good hug.

17. Go to Ossining with C. B. The [Ralph Waldo] Trines meet us in auto. Drive to Briar Cliff Lodge and about the country. C. B.

looking for property for sanitarium. Stop at the Van Cortland house, built in 1691. Franklin and Washington used to stop there. . . . Found an enthusiastic reader in Miss Van. C.

He notes seeing President Taft (who 'looks sleek and happy') lay the corner-stone in a building for the blind; he goes to Whitman's birthplace; and, with Howells, attends the funeral of John Bigelow. 'See several famous men and some infamous men there.' In a few days, at home, he notes bluebird voices in the air, and is finishing, 'The Phantoms Behind Us,' and 'The Noon of Science,' having rewritten both essays four times.

I seem to be at the top of the wave now. I suppose the trough is just beyond. . . . I read in Eckermann's Conversations with Goethe yesterday where Goethe said he had not had a moment of happiness in all his seventy-five years. How much luckier I have been! I have had five months of happiness this very year. My happiness is always fruitful.

Perhaps Goethe forgot his happy moments when sad, just as Mr. Burroughs forgot his sad ones when happy. Assuredly in the five months just passed, he had had some sad hours, but he was perhaps in nothing more fortunate than in his power to idealize the past. A friend, rallying him on this trait, once told him his ornithology was weak when it came to the *Anserinæ* and the *Cygninæ*, since with him 'Memory's geese are always swans.'

[Journal] December 27. Have just been reading St Paul. How eloquent, what good literature! These epistles would never have come down to us had they not been good literature. They are full of the wisdom of the soul — full of the things that save us in this world.

The year closes with mention of writing on Living Matter, and of quitting his Study to board with Mrs. Burroughs in Poughkeepsie.

CHAPTER XXVIII

LENGTHENING SHADOWS

1912

The sun now low in the west rises for mornings and for noons continual;
To frozen clods ever the spring's invisible law returns,
With grass and flowers and summer fruits and corn.

WHITMAN

IN early January, writing of their plans for a southern trip, Mr. Burroughs enclosed a letter from Mr. Muir and added:

You see he is cutting and halving the Southern hemisphere, first South America and then South Africa. The crazy Scot! I hope he will get his fill of trees. I think he has no domestic or home sense. He is a born exile.

'The Breath of Life' is good. [A title suggested for his essay on living matter.] I will take it, thank you. Your criticism is good, I take it also.

Julian may want you to go with him to the Campfire dinner. Remember me to the Philputts. Had a nice present from Grace Gassette — a Scotch cap and a soft gray woollen comforter, both very fine, but I wish she had not sent them.

A white world here, but not very cold. I hope your house-hunting has been fruitful. . . .

Before starting on their southern journey, Mr. and Mrs. Burroughs came to me in Pelham, New York, on the last day of January. They quite approved of the Swiss chalet perched on a wooded hill, and during their week there were of great practical help in setting the house in order, he in putting up brackets and helping make book-shelves, and she in hemming curtains and table linen, and upholstering the ironing-board.

While at breakfast one morning Mr. Burroughs suggested: 'How would you like "Woodby" for your place? It is by the woods, as we are by the river. Riverby, Woodby — I believe I like it.' So 'Woodby' it became.

1. A WINTER IN GEORGIA

News of the travelers came from Chattanooga, from Mrs. Burroughs:

Dear Dr. Barrus,

Just a line to tell you how sorry I felt for you the day we left. I knew you would be as lonely as the grave when you went back to your home. I always feel that way when my friends leave me but it can't be helped.

I suppose you are nearly settled by this time and I hope your adventure will be a success in every way.

My cousin seemed very glad to see us. She has a very nice house and showed us a great deal of attention. It seems like being in California. We rode some forty miles yesterday . . . over the Battle fields. I haven't time to tell you now how interesting it all was. We go today on Lookout Mountain. We expect to leave here the last of this week. I hope you keep well and keep up your courage too by all means. With love,

U. B.

Write me all the news.

From Athens, Georgia, Mr. Burroughs writes in mid-February:

. . . Mr. and Mrs. De Loach seem very happy to have us here and are doing all they can to make us comfortable. He has many things planned for me, but I have vetoed most of them. I would be worked harder here than they tried to work me in California if I were willing. They seem to think I have lectures and speeches in every pocket which I am eager to fire off. I shall not fire off any, nor attend any club lunches or dinners. . . .

This is a rather nice town, but most of them are as ugly as sin. The curse of slavery is yet over the land. Such disshevelled, unkempt looking landscapes! Never a spot where you would want to walk or sit down or pitch your tent — no cosiness or hominess or domesticity in the land or the prospect — the blood red gashes in the slopes made by the rains, the unfenced fields, the make-shift houses and hovels, and the absence of our turf — no pastures, no meadows, the litter of corn-stalks and cotton stalks everywhere, and the general raw, crude look of everything — the red, muddy roads, the sluggish turbid streams, the ravished forests — oh, how distasteful it all is to me, and would be to you! I shall be happy when I can get back to Slabsides and to Woodchuck Lodge. . . .

I heard myself eulogized the other day at the Country Club in Tennessee by an ex-member of Congress, in that bald, loud, indiscriminating way — the way of the political orator — that made me shiver. They will not get a chance to do that here. . . .

March 7. . . . Robins are dying here of starvation. We brought in one that could not fly, kept him over night, and I fed him with worms. He quickly learned to take them from my hand. The next afternoon we let him go forth, greatly cheered and strengthened. If you see him he will tell you about it.

March 12. We are here near the sea in a very delightful place ten miles from Savannah. A broad arm of the sea comes up in front of the house. Brown sedgy marshes stretch for miles away. I am sitting on the broad porch (but with my overcoat on) as I write this. Eight miles away I see the open door of the Atlantic. The houses here stand up in a broad level terrace ten feet above the water, and dotted with gray bearded live oaks.

I see long lines of low wooded shores and islands as I look oceanward. It is in many ways an ideal spot. The house is large and well appointed, and the people, Mr. and Mrs. Lester, are very kind and agreeable. Mrs. B. is good natured and I ought to thrive here. I have not yet got to work, but hope to soon. . . . There is a good library here and I am again reading Spencer and Tyndall.

Mrs. B. said this morning she wished we were at Pelham. . . . Are you better? Are you eating and sleeping? . . . I hear the 'okalee' starling as I write.

March 24. We have exchanged the warmth and sunshine of Savannah for the wet and cold of Washington. . . . The one thing I see here as I go about that looks like an old friend, almost like the face of a member of my own family, is the Dome of the Capitol. This alone is unchanged. It looks like Walt. It suggests my native hills. It has figured in my dreams since I left Washington. Once I dreamed of it as covered with farms and homes where some of my people lived. How many times I have seen it rising over the hills, as I have tramped over the surrounding country, from all points of the compass; it has been the one part of the city that I have seldom lost sight of.

We propose to put in a week here and then come to N.Y. We will come to you, if you are sure you want us, and will not put yourself out. I can sleep anywhere, if you can take care of Mrs. B. . . . I am returning in better condition than when I left. I bring back six more pounds of flesh (144 now) and about one pound of manuscript. I must stop gaining now. I find the thing for me for breakfast is cracked wheat. See if you can get a package there. . . .

2. A Modern Nicodemus

On the third of April we celebrated Mr. Burroughs's seventy-fifth birthday at Woodby. In the forenoon he walked two miles over the hills, bringing back pussy-willows and the purple cowls of the skunk-cabbage. Reporters who got wind of the little party came unbidden, one of whom, when writing it up, asserted that Mr. Burroughs had walked twenty-five miles on his birthday, over the Westchester hills, 'to listen to the first call of the wake-robin.'!!

When one of the guests asked Mr. Burroughs how he

managed to keep so young, he retorted, 'I was born young, and I have never thrown away my youth.'

The birthday tribute by Mrs. Jean Dwight Franklin which had just come out in the current 'Atlantic' was referred to, and some one repeated it for the benefit of those who had not seen it:

> 'Away with clocks and sun-dials! Time and I
> Have made a compact — this to be my boon,
> To hear the evening thrush, and know the hour,
> Yet feel it noon.'

After commenting gratefully on the quatrain, Mr. Burroughs said:

> Life cannot stay the same, of course, as you grow old, but I like the afternoon sunlight, too. It is different, I know, from the morning sunlight fresh upon the grass and hillsides, but there's a charm all its own in its lengthening shadows.

A few minutes later he cried, as he looked out of the window, 'There comes John Muir!' And, sure enough, over the crest of the hill, we saw Mr. R. U. Johnson, making good his promise to bring John Muir *if he could catch him*. It was good to see the 'twa Johnnies' throw their arms around each other, and to listen to their lively banter.

'You see I got there!' said Mr. Muir triumphantly, referring to his recent journeyings in South America and South Africa. As we sat around the fire later, we tried to inveigle him into talking of his far journeyings; but, perversely skirting all around these topics, he talked of places and people nearer home.

In the days that followed, various organizations celebrated Mr. Burroughs's birthday with a vengeance, causing him to be dubbed Nicodemus. His friends insisted on his being born on the 8th, 10th, and 12th, as well as on the 3d.[1] At one of these parties he said that, although he had always congratulated himself on being born in April, he had not exactly counted on four or five April birthdays in one week, and was

[1] A recent critic has intimated that J. B.'s head was turned by the attentions lavished on him in his later years. It was not from vanity that he permitted these and similar demonstrations, but from a kindly yielding to the importunities of his friends. He dreaded to have an ado made over him. It was often more of a hardship than his friends had any realization of. It may also be said that for one demonstration of which the Public knew, there were scores he refused, but only by dint of screwing his courage to the sticking-point, and then begging those near him to make him keep it there.

getting to be more afraid of the celebrations than of the birthdays themselves. Dr. Julian Abernethy said at one of these gatherings, that 'one may traverse the literature of centuries without hearing a single bird-note,' but that when John Burroughs began to write the birds began to sing, and that he had done more to reveal a new heaven and a new earth, during the past forty years, and to bring mankind into intelligent and appreciative relations with nature than all writers of our literature during the preceding five hundred years.

Howells and Burroughs both passed the seventy-fifth milestone that year. The papers pointed out that they were alike loved by their countrymen for the sweetness and sanity of their outlook upon life, the simplicity of their living, and the breadth and warmth of their human sympathies.

At the reception held for Mr. Burroughs at the American Museum of Natural History, a children's play was given in which the characters, dressed as books, and bearing the names of his many volumes, prattled prettily about the gifts they brought. Before he was to escape, still another party was given by pupils of the Horace Mann school, — a costume play, 'The Appeal of the Birds.' The children, dressed as birds, petitioned Uncle Sam to protect them from men and women and boys and cats. The affair closed with a dance of fifty tiny rose-bedecked maidens, who sang:

Come, Uncle John,
Today is spring!
Come, for the world is a wonderful thing,
Full of robins, bluebirds, and flowers,
Of happy children and sunny hours.
Come, dance and sing and laugh and play,
For you're only seventy-five today!

3. A Double Bereavement

The year that had started in so blithely was soon to bring anxiety and a double sorrow; but it also brought new friends, some of whom were to exert a cheering and beneficent influence through all his declining years.

In late April he writes of an impending loss:

> Ed found his father in a very bad way . . . thinks he may die any day. I am going out there soon. . . . Curtis's death will put a sadder look on my native hills, and Woodchuck Lodge will not be the same again. . . .

More and more demands are made upon me . . . a stranger from Buffalo wants seven autographs, with seven sentiments to go in seven copies of 'Leaves of Grass,' to be given to his friends. . . . I shall write him that sentiments come off my tree very hard, and he will have to send to a friend of mine in Pelham to shake it. . . .

At the Old Home, while weighed down by his brother's suffering and decline, he learned of the failing health of his sister Jane. Amid the deepening gloom he turned for cheer to a new correspondent, Miss Edna Albert:

MY DEAR LITTLE STRANGER,

I must drop you a line this rainy morning, not as an adequate answer to your charming letter and charming picture, but just to acknowledge the receipt of them. I came here to see my brother once more . . . he is a great sufferer from an epitheliomal cancer on the forehead. It is his time to die and he is impatient to go. . . . 'In mercy, O Death, come quickly!'

My dear friend, Dr. Clara Barrus . . . is in a New York hospital where last week she underwent an operation. . . . She is one of the best friends I have in the world. So you see, my dear child, I am not in a cheerful mood this morning, and my thoughts turn to you whom I have never seen as a sort of refuge and escape in this time of trouble. You are a bright spirit, and have a warm heart, and will understand me. . . .

Journal and letters now record the unlooked-for bereavement which overtook the one he had long been anticipating.

[Journal] May 26. Jane died yesterday morning. The last of my four sisters. A tender, affectionate and hard-working woman . . . good sense and wholesome instincts. . . . She piloted me to school in our childhood. . . . How the shadows around me deepen!

From the Old Home, on May 28th:

I am here waiting for train-time to go to Jane's funeral. It is a lovely morning, the country so green and fresh, the orchards white with apple bloom, the bit of lawn in front golden with dandelions, the herd of cows as you know them peacefully grazing in the fields, bumblebees humming, and bobolinks singing in Caswell's meadow. Yonder where we saw the buckwheat bloom and brown, the plow is at work, and in Montgomery Hollow there is a new map of various shades of green and red. A soft haze veils the mountains, and the South wind goes by caressingly.

I have just been hoeing the peas and planting a row of golden bantam corn.

Oh, the world is so lovely and we bury Jane today! We buried

Abigail when the autumn leaves were falling, and we bury Jane when the orchard bloom is falling. When we buried Father and Mother the snows were falling. How regardless Nature is of our moods and bereavements. Poor Curtis lies there, a mere wreck of his former self. . . . And here I sit in the house where he once lived, looking out upon the fields where he labored. He talks a little, but had forgotten that today was Jane's funeral day. . . . My heart is full of tears, but my eyes are dry.

How I wish you could be here now and see this lovely land — the very spirit of youth is in the orchards and fields and over these hills, and my sole felicity is that I am still young enough to recognize it. . . . I must stop now and start down across the fields.

[Journal] June 24. Just at dawn this morning as I lay in my cot on the porch, Frank Caswell came along. . . .

'Are you awake?'

'Yes.'

'Well, Curtis passed away last night.'

I was prepared for it, but I could not parry the blow. I shall never forget the effect the news had on me, there in the gray June morning. . . .

Miss Barbour and Mrs. Shepard came on evening train.

On the 26th he writes in his Journal:

I go over to the house at ten. Ed is there and some of Jane's children. Elder Clark preaches a sermon of words and Scripture phrases, but not of ideas. . . . We drive down to the cemetery in the dust. . . .

Fifty years ago I was here helping Curtis in haying.

'Many men of many minds!' That summer, when the 'Outlook' accepted the author's essay 'The Hazards of the Past,' its editor wrote him they considered it one of the best essays the 'Outlook' had ever published; but a correspondent from Canada wrote that on reading it he felt he had lost John Burroughs for sure, and added:

'When I read all those antediluvian names of all sorts of nondescript beasts, and the scientific discussions upon them, the man who sought the nightingale in England died, and a new, strange person took his place. The world will love you more, I truly believe, if you leave these prehistoric animals alone, and keep on helping us to get close to nature as it is now.' To this the author replied:

I am just as interested in the past as in the present, and want to know, or form some image to myself, how life fared in the past on

this planet, as well as how it is today. There are data to help us form such an image, and I have been looking for them. How can one fail to have an interest in his remote ancestry, as well as in his nearby family ancestors?

A letter to Miss Albert in late June reads:

Your jolly letter of two days ago found me sequestered here among the woodchucks again. I think the 'chucks are happier than I am. I cannot sleep the time away in my hole as they can, nor forget my bereavements. . . . My native hills look as good as ever to me, even when seen through the mists of sorrow. . . .

Your letter gives me hope that you will come in July or August. Pilgrims here always stop at the Lodge, and sleep on the porch, or in the chamber, or in the barn, or in a tent, as they prefer. Your task would be to wipe the breakfast dishes and cheer the master of the house with your gay spirits. . . . Dr. Barrus may come with a patient in July, for a couple of weeks, and she may not. It is all uncertain. My wife may come for a week or two, but this also is uncertain. She does not like woodchucks nor Woodchuck Lodge as I do, nor a Lodge in the Wilderness, like Slabsides. She is an impeccable housekeeper, and my likes and ways about a house are a sore trial to her.

[*J. B. to E. A. July* 11]

. . . I was alone here for awhile, then two lady teachers from New Jersey came and kept house and cooked for me for ten days. They did things up brown. Then Rouland came, and two girls from N.Y. . . . They are camping in a small canvas house on the hill above me overlooking our broad valley. They sup or dine with us daily. Yesterday in honor of Woodchuck Lodge, the French girl cooked a woodchuck which my nephew shot, and we had a real woodchuck dinner. It required a good deal of art and science both to get the rank earth flavor out of the 'chuck, but the black-eyed, and black-haired Cook did it, and it was — well, not so bad. The 'chuck had been helping the rat eat our peas, but I concluded I had rather have the peas out of the 'chuck than in. . . .

[Journal] July 21. A slow rain. We have a fire in Franklin. Randolph S. Bourne came Saturday. Glad to see him here — a fine mind, a poor body. Has a future, I think. Already written several essays for the Atlantic.

27. Cool nights, three blankets. An Italian sculptor [C. S. Pietro] began to make a clay bust of me on Monday, doing well.

This was the first of many studies of Mr. Burroughs made by Pietro. Besides the bust mentioned here, the sculptor made at that time an *al fresco* sitting statuette for which Mr. Burroughs posed under an old apple tree by the stone wall at

Woodchuck Lodge.[1] The bust (which was destroyed in a fire in the sculptor's studio) looked, Mr. Burroughs said, too much like a statesman — like Conkling.

[Journal] August 25. No important events since my last entry. Here at W. L. all the time. . . . Have slept under three blankets and often with hot water bottles to my feet. Write each day on Life and Biology, on Science, and Literature. . . .

Mrs. J[ohnson] stayed two weeks. Mrs. B[urroughs] came July 18 and left August 9. Miss Lucy Stanton of Georgia came on 18th and stayed till 24th, a charming young woman. [She painted a portrait of him while there.] C. B. still here, gaining all the time — a great help to me. Mr. John Shea of Kansas, a Harvard student, came the 17th. We all fell in love with him. Hope Kansas is full of such men. A year at Harvard, taking a post-graduate course.

He writes of posing to still another artist in late August:

Mr. and Mrs. [Walter Otto] Beck, the artist and his wife, came up in the afternoon, and as she said she was a housekeeper, I proposed that they stop with me and she do the cooking. They jumped at the chance. They came yesterday and spent the day, and I gave him a sitting. She got dinner and did well. . . . We had a roast leg of lamb, potatoes, peas and beans, all well cooked. They are coming this morning prepared to stay. He is doing me in pastel, works rapidly. . . . His first hour produced a pretty good picture. I pose up in the orchard on that big rock.

As the month advanced and more and more company came, he wrote wearily in his Journal: 'I am tired of company. They get me out of tune with my work.' Complaining of one guest, 'What a sticking plaster she is!' And of the posing, 'I hope *that* is at an end. I shall never say "yes" again to painter or sculptor. My work has been marred this summer by that tribe.' When sending a copy of his 'Time and Change' to Judge Talbot, he wrote: 'You will find this new book hard on your gizzard — there's so much geology in it, and I doubt if the evolution mollifies it any. I promise not to do so again.

[Journal] September 17. In afternoon I walk to 'Scotland' and get a few blackberries. Find a mouse's nest in a niche under an overhanging ledge, where one looks for a phœbe's nest; — thought it was one at first, — covered with moss just like a phœbe's. The body of the nest was thistle-down, thick and compact, with a small hole to a

[1] The statuette is owned by Mrs. Finley J. Shepard.

cavity in the center. A prettier nest I never saw — three feet from the ground, and no means of access that I could see, except by leaping. The nest was new, but not occupied. The moss was from rocks where water trickles in wet seasons — long, yellowish-green. The bottom of the nest was covered with moss also, so it could hardly have been for protection. A unique find.

To Dr. Henry van Dyke, that autumn, he wrote the following letter:

I am sorry I cannot promise you the paper you ask for, for the Academy. My wife and I are planning to seek a warmer climate in late November. More than that, I have no paper suitable for such an occasion. Still more, I never read my papers before any body.

I had a good word from you this summer when you were up in Newfoundland with MacDonald and Warburton, for which I thank you. I hope you enjoyed MacDonald as much as I did in California. What a boy, and yet what a powerful man he is! I am very fond of Warburton also.

I am going to put in another paragraph that I hope will not disturb you: Not long since I got a copy of your collected poems for a friend of mine. I had an hour with the volume before it passed out of my hands. It was a real surprise to me that any American poet had in these late years produced such a body of excellent poetry. Accept my congratulations.

While at Woodby he sent the following reply to a correspondent who, much exercised at slanderous reports about Roosevelt, had appealed to Oom John to bolster up his defense:

I really did not suppose anybody dare make the slanderous statements about Roosevelt that you quote. There is no truth in them whatever. I have known him quite intimately for over twenty years, have camped and tramped with him in the West and East and South, and have never known him to take a drop of any alcoholic beverage whatever, except a little champagne at banquets — a vice which, if it be one, I myself indulge in at banquets. While I was with him in Milwaukee, I wanted him to drink some of the Milwaukee beer with me, but he declined. He once told me that he had never drunk a 'high ball' in his life, and did not like the taste of whiskey. He does not use tobacco in any form. . . .

As for his profanity, the only swearing I have ever heard him do is to slap his knee and say, 'By Jove!' I do not believe that he indulges in anything worse than that.

He is a man of strong convictions, and he calls a spade a spade, and a lie a lie, and for my part I am glad that he does.

The Republican nomination at Chicago was stolen from him, and

I am glad that he charged the theft home where it belonged. He has his faults, of which I am keenly sensitive, but intemperance and profanity and lying are not among them. . . .

When Oom John heard the news of the attempted assassination of T. R., he wrote him as follows:

I am thinking anxiously of you these days, as is all the world, and fervently hoping for your speedy recovery. The bullet of that would-be assassin evidently disturbed the hearts of your friends more than it did your own.

I have lamented that you were in the presidential race under such adverse conditions, but now you are in, I devoutly want you to win. It would add to my length of days to witness the humiliation of the bosses and the impotent rage of the big New York dailies.

In a few days I shall send you a copy of my new volume, 'Time and Change.' If you had had a copy of that in your vest pocket that night, I am sure the hostile bullet would not have penetrated all that geology.

After election he wrote in his Journal:

Election goes for the Democrats — might have been worse — might have gone Republican. I wanted to vote for Wilson, but voted for T. R., on the score of friendship — a thing he would not have done — a thing no man should do.

The death of Bradford Torrey elicited the following:

He was a rare spirit and a maker of pure literature. His style has an ease and flexibility and a conversational charm that I wish I might inherit. Yet Clifton Johnson says his books have little sale. What a criticism of the readers of nature books!

The Barn Door Ms. came yesterday. Your generous praise warmed my gizzard, you did it in such an inimitable way. . . . I have got the two papers in shape now — 'The Comfort of the Hills' and 'A Barn Door Outlook' — and have written to [R. U.] Johnson about them. I made a few changes in the last, and Julian typed a page for me. Your suggestions are all to the point. . . .

In early November:

Just now I am trying to write something about my youth for Julian. I think I owe it to him to do so, and he has set his heart upon it.

Muir's account of his boyhood throws light on his character — especially on the traits in him I don't like. 'Use the rod and spoil the man' is the axiom I deduce from his experience. He was thrashed, and thrashed others, in school and out, all through his youth. Boys

met mainly to fight. Their play was fighting. To give a bloody nose and get one yourself was the fun. Two boys used to stand up before each other with whips in their hands and then lay on MacDuff, and see which would first cry enough. That was play. That is why Muir loves to do it now in conversation. It has become his ruling passion. Conversation with him is a sparring-match with gads. He likes to get in the first cut and to follow it up. It delights him to see you wince. I can't appreciate that attitude of mind myself. I had rather receive pain than give it. Yet see how tender Muir assumes to be toward the animals! Yet he likes to walk over the flesh of his fellow men with spurs in his soles. I never fought at school in my life, and I was never whipped that I can recall. I was never whipped at home. [He forgets that he once wrote of his father taking a gad to him — the only time, though — when he let the cows get in the clover-lot.] No doubt I deserved it, but my parents had tender hearts, too.

Muir had too much of the rough, bruising experience in his life, and I had too little. It made him callous, and it made me a tenderfoot.

I suppose my shrinking, evasive attitude of mind is a challenge to him to lay on. Conversation with me is not a sparring-match, but an exchange of ideas. When Muir smites me on one cheek, I turn the other, often inadvertently, I confess.

In December, lingering on in his Study at Riverby, loath to go to the city to board, he occupied himself with a paper which he first named 'Salt the Sheep,' later, 'The Hungry Sheep,' which, however, he never published. It dealt with the inadequacy of the modern pulpit and with the hungry sheep that look up, yet are not fed. Writing of this essay later, he said:

The Ms. came Saturday night. Your criticism is sound, as usual. Thank you for it. I doubt if I make anything of the article, unless I rewrite it four or five times. My outdoor papers are the only ones that spring full-grown from my brain. My other essays are always embryonic when they are born, and I have to put them in an incubator and nurse them. I wish I could keep to the outdoor themes; but the philosophical machinery of my mind craves action, more and more, as I indulge it.

A letter from him dated December 6th marks the beginning of a new and helpful friendship soon to come into his life:

I had a surprising letter. Mr. Ford, of automobile fame, is a great admirer of my books — says there are few persons in the world who have given him the pleasure I have. He wants to do something for me — he wants to present me with a Ford automobile all complete, and send a man to teach Julian how to run it. His sole motive is his

admiration for me and my work — there shall be no publicity in connection with it.

I am embarrassed by his offer. What shall I do? I want the machine, but how can I accept such a gift from a stranger, and keep my self-respect? What do you say? Julian's family, of course, all say Yes. My friends must decide for me. *You* must decide.

His friends urged him to accept the offer in the generous spirit in which it was made. A subsequent letter says, 'The Ford car will be here early in January.'

CHAPTER XXIX

OLD FRIENDS AND NEW

1913

Thanks in old age . . .
For health, the midday sun, the impalpable air — for life, mere life,
For precious ever-lingering memories . . .
For all my days . . .
For gentle words, caresses, gifts . . . .
. . . for sweet appreciation . . .
Thanks, joyful thanks!

WHITMAN

THE New Year was yet in its swaddling-clothes when the gift of the automobile came to Mr. Burroughs. He found the deputies who conveyed it 'interesting and engaging,' and from them learned that 'Mr. Ford is a shy man,' to which he added amusedly, 'too timid to meet me!' He recorded in the Journal that the chariot ran like a top, and that his youngest granddaughter went with them on the first ride, sitting silent as a sphinx. It was characteristic of him that almost the first ride in the modern vehicle was a ride into the past — to Rhinecliff to see a pupil he had not seen for fifty-seven years:

He resurrected those long-gone days. I could see his father and mother, and the little brown house by the bridge where they lived, and the red schoolhouse nearby where I, as a green country boy began my first school — a world as far away as Uranus suddenly made real to me!

When in late January he signed his name to four hundred and fifty letters in behalf of the Bird Protection Bill, he said his last signature was as firm as the first. Mrs. Burroughs helped fold and place them in the envelopes, and he hurried them off to Washington, a month later going on there with Mr. Glen Buck, and Mr. Ernest Thompson Seton, and doing his first and only lobbying. The McLane Bill passed the last day of Congress.

His first impression of M. Bergson follows:

Go to Bergson's lecture at Columbia. Not a word of his French can I understand but *donc*, but I do not tire of looking at him. Small thin man of the Emersonian type, an idealist — 'a prophet of the

soul.' Superb head. The rather austere Emersonian smile; manner animated. Heavy eyebrows, small, deep-set, but expressive eyes; his thin hands look cold. Strong chin and nose — a wonderful mind.

And later:

Feb. 19. To Columbia at the tea given in Bergson's honor. Meet him face to face. He knows about me. I told him my great pleasure in meeting him: that Emerson was the inspiration of my youth, and he the inspiration of my old age. With a deprecating gesture he seemed to disclaim such doubtful honors, and then began to talk of the unexpected idealism he found here — in Emerson, in James, and others. Then he was whirled away to face some other admirer. One of the most symmetrical and beautiful heads I ever saw. A small man, — not an imposing figure — not an aggressive or dominating personality, but a wonderful mind, and a gentle heart.

Met Eucken also. A white bushy top, like myself — not a striking head or figure. He, too, knows my work, and is very cordial in his German-English. His work has not yet made an impression on me.

When later he heard M. Bergson lecture in English, he wrote:

Metaphysical and hard to follow for an hour and a half. Fine and suggestive. He reads from his Ms. Speaks English like a native.

At that time he spent much time overhauling old letters, many of which he had preserved since youth; sending them on in batches, and bringing others whenever he came to Woodby. 'I have fully a bushel for you yet,' he wrote, 'that you may find suggestive in your work on the biography.'

The following letter to Mr. Frederick Dellenbaugh, conjecturally dated 1913, reveals Mr. Burroughs's opinion of a then recent book of travel:

I have been reading the Amazon Jungle book of your friend ——. I hope it will not hurt your feelings if I tell you he is a faker. I got along with the book with only a few misgivings till I came to that boa-constrictor story. Then I rebelled. A snake 2 ft. 1 inch through and 56 ft. long! like a very large saw log! Preposterous — and piled up in a cone 7 ft. high! No snake piles itself up in that way — and the head *at the bottom of the pile!*

He was near enough to see the snake breathe and that its eye was fixed upon them, why, then, did he not take its picture? There certainly could be no excuse for his not taking its photograph in the morning when it was dead. It is, of course, a lie — probably not made out of whole cloth, but out of a small piece of cloth — an ordinary boa, 15 or 20 ft. long and the size of your leg.

The whole story has an air of an awkwardly fabricated yarn. The last part of the book is nearly all faked. It has not the verisimilitude of a real experience. Think of those experienced rubber hunters staying there in the wilderness till they began to starve! then think of that tribe of refined, courteous romantic *cannibal* Indians with their chief a perfect gentleman; or of that battle with the Peruvians where Winchester rifles were defeated by blow guns and bows and arrows. Think of permanently poisoning a stream of running water with a few poisonous roots!

The whole yarn has the air of a yarn and nothing else.

I had been reading Charles Sheldon's hunting books, Col. Patterson's African book, and Carl Lumholtz's book 'Among the Cannibals of Australia,' and never questioned a line of them; they ring true on every page; but this —— book rings false in its last half. . . . I wonder how he deceived you. He approached you on your blind side — the side of your sympathies.

About that time he wrote:

I have a letter from Sir Oliver Lodge. He was interested in my N. A. Review article, and sent me a pamphlet of his on 'Life and Matter.' . . . If I come down again, I want Dellenbaugh to come and dine or lunch at Woodby.

[Journal] March 4. Go to the MacDowell Club with C. B., to a reception to Alfred Noyes. Large, strong, healthy young Britisher, looks like a University man — not like a poet. He lectures on the future of poetry, but does not convince us that poetry has any future. Then recites some of his own poems. Does it well. But he is not a great poet. Nothing in his poems that goes to the heart, or soul — one page of Wordsworth or Arnold is worth it all.

One afternoon, on returning to Poughkeepsie, after his forenoon's work in his Study at Riverby, he finds a fresh cause for anxiety in the illness of Mrs. Burroughs:

[Journal] March 10. Greatly alarmed over the condition of Ursula — a double pneumonia; fear the worst — just begin to realize all she has been to me, and all she has done for me.

A letter of this date, with its shaky handwriting, as well as its contents, shows how profoundly agitated he was over this illness of his wife:

Mrs. B. is pretty bad, — pneumonia in both lungs and a weak heart. I am alarmed and her doctor is. Temperature, 102, pulse, 120, respiration, 42. I see what a blow her death would be to me. When I think of it, I see she has been going down the last month — no courage, no strength. I will send a card daily.

The next report, written in the usual firm hand, was encouraging:

Mrs. B. is better now. Temp. is down, and she sat up and combed her hair. She can't have pneumonia. . . . I rejoice to see this cloud lift. I did not feel equal to passing through the valley of the shadow that I seemed to see opening before me yesterday. I am weak, oh, so weak, and the past does grip me so!

Subsequently, the report says the patient has pneumonia of one lung, and a valvular lesion of the heart, but that the doctor says she will pull through: 'Heart and kidneys doing well. She does not look ill. Her eye is bright, and she wants to talk.'

For some time the almost daily bulletins, and the Journal, contain little besides reports of the invalid. On the 17th, becoming alarmed at a change for the worse, he telegraphs:

My wife is not so well this morning. She has lost hope, says she must go. She has nervous attacks — not much temperature, but high pulse. She wants you to come today, if you can. Come to Highland on train from Newburgh about 5.30. I fear the other lung is affected. Do come.

Aside from this brief set-back, convalescence was uninterrupted. He notes every change, rejoices when she takes nourishment and again begins to talk baby-talk — a long-standing habit, when in a cheerful mood. When he reports, 'She begins to look at me in her old critical way,' it was welcome proof to him that she was out of the woods, and his thoughts again turn to the calls of the nuthatches, the chorus of peepers, and the advent of the first spring butterfly. He sends his essay on Bergson, 'A Prophet of the Soul' ('Under the Apple Trees'), to the Atlantic; attends a tea at Vassar; and spends a few days at Slabsides with Mr. John Shea. If he comes to Pelham for his birthday, he wants no ado made over it.

Mr. Sedgwick takes my Bergson paper and speaks of it as 'alluring,' predicting it will convert readers to Bergson. I have another paper ready, 'An Ever-present Mystery.' Will let you have it to type soon.

Poor Child! I think so often of you working there on that book about your friend.[1] I will say frankly that it is more interesting and readable than I thought it would be. You have made the most of your material, and I think the book will go.

[1] *Our Friend John Burroughs.*

Presently Mrs. Burroughs returned to Riverby, and the family living in their gardener's cottage moved down to the stone dwelling, assuming the running of the house, hoping thus to relieve master and mistress of all housekeeping cares. It was an experiment of short duration. Mrs. Burroughs could not let another take the helm, and after a faithful trial, like the King of France with his four thousand men, the Coverts, who had moved down the hill, moved up again, and again the elderly couple was confronted with the usual housekeeping problems, henceforth increasingly difficult for both. The new maids came and went as of old. Occasionally the dwellers at Riverby escaped from these problems for short runs in the car.

[Journal] April 8. Ran the car yesterday to Port Ewen, and then came home and ran it into the locust tree just inside our gates. Never look back while driving your car! I looked back as I came through the gates to see if I was going to hit, and the little beast sprang for that tree like a squirrel. Broke or bent her forward spring so we can't crank her.

The new plaything was to give him, but more especially his friends, many an anxious turn for a time. Some times he would record, 'Mrs. B. and I had a beautiful run to Clintondale — no more perfect day ever came down out of heaven.' Again:

Drive the car out beyond Pleasant Valley alone. Get stuck. Think car broken in turning around. Send for help. Car all right.

[Journal] May 3. Have just taken a run of a few miles in the car. The blind, desperate thing still scares me. How ready it is to take to the ditch, or a tree, or the fence! I fear I have not the mechanical type of mind ever to feel at ease with it, or to feel perfect master of it.

P.M. A run to H[ighland], through the fresh, fragrant May air. . . . A golden border of dandelions to the roadside; the apple orchards masses of pink and white; the fragrance of lilacs streaking the air; the grass lush in the meadows; a thick mist of foliage in the woods and wayside trees; the delicate maple-fringe hanging beneath its canopy of leaves; plowing and hoeing going on in vineyards; swallows darting in and out of empty barns; and the entrancing beauty and suggestiveness of May over all — the calm, waiting, unfolding May.

Since he had eyes for all this beauty, is it strange that he occasionally had mishaps with the car? His friends who rode

with him, even after he became a good driver, rode with their hearts in their mouths, for his power of observation was henceforth more severely taxed: he must, of course, give his accustomed heed to the birds and the flowers, *plus*, on occasion, keeping an eye on the road, and on any complications likely to be met thereon.

Considering his seventy-six years, it was remarkable that the Apostle of Walking became so proficient a driver. His friends felt a mingling of admiration, amusement, and anxiety on witnessing the incongruous sight of John Burroughs at the wheel; and when they saw him desecrate the seclusion of Slabsides by driving his car up that steep, tortuous road, admiration for his skill in manipulation of the car warred still more with anxiety; for, if he happened to see a bird in the bush, the wheel in his hand got scant attention. Off his hand would fly to trace the course of the bird, as he would call, 'There goes an orchard oriole!' And then the little car, after a course as wayward as that of the bird's, would be speedily righted. 'See that yellow-breasted chat!' and again the waving hand, and swaying car, and palpitating hearts of the passengers! A year or two later, one of our guests at Riverby, after a similar experience, confessed that she consoled herself for her trepidation by thinking how fine the headlines in the newspapers would look:

MET DEATH IN AN AUTOMOBILE DRIVEN BY JOHN BURROUGHS

[Journal] May 13. . . . Grieved over the death of Mr. [Francis Fisher] Browne, which occurred Sunday at Santa Barabara — one of my best friends. I have many tender memories of him. . . . Dear friend! your name will always be associated with some of my happiest days.

John o' Mountains, writing soon after, said:

All California seems lonely, now that Beloved Browne has left us. He was one of the most beautiful characters I ever met in life's wanderings, and surely none was ever better loved.

In mid-May, John o' Birds is at Mt. Holyoke walking and talking with the students, — 'a harum-scarum talk about everything under the sun.' Later, at Littleton, Massachusetts, he wrote of the 'pumping' of the bittern: 'The most watery

sound I ever heard from an animal, as if his crop and neck were full of water, up through which he forces great bubbles of air.'

One day, in Boston, when looking at the statue of Edward Everett Hale by Bela Pratt, he said:

I am glad Boston has raised a monument to him. He had a great fund of humanity — very ready sympathy — was a very lovable character. He wrote some things that will live — 'The Man Without a Country,' and 'My Double and How he Undid Me.' He was one to sweeten life and keep it sane and wholesome.

At Arlington, Mr. Trowbridge was in the yard with a saw, about to trim some trees, when Mr. Burroughs called. On recognizing him Mr. Trowbridge came towards him with open arms, and they kissed each other. In their subsequent talk they touched on early loves and aspirations, latter day achievements, and future hopes and plans. Of Whitman, of David A. Wasson, of the artist Gifford, and of Daniel Ricketson they spoke, and of many another friend of earlier days.

Afterwards, Mr. Burroughs said of his old friend:

Trowbridge's broad human endowment, and his capacity for friendship, his geniality, and his gift for story-telling are what he will be remembered for. He belongs to that class which shine, not by scholarly, but by human traits — love, sympathy, good-will, supplemented by fine intellectual qualities. His atmosphere is like Whitman's — like my own, perhaps — he doesn't put you on trial at once. He values persons for their human traits. It would be as hard for him as for Walt or me to be a stern judge. We differ from Emerson's type — the more austere — men who lay emphasis on wit and ideas more than on the merely human qualities.

Pleasant calls on the Sharps at Hingham, and on the Kennedys at Belmont, were events of those days. At the latter place the host remarked:

John went to England to hear the nightingale, but failed to hear it. I heard it and wrote about it, but I find most persons would rather read about John's failing to hear the bird, than about my hearing it.

On return to Riverby he writes:

I have been helping Mrs. B. wash curtains and a bed-spread this

morning, and am still a little warm, mentally and physically, from the task. Julian is on his new job.[1]

His *naïveté* comes out in the following June entry and letter, when he became acquainted with Mr. Henry Ford:

In Detroit with Mr. Ford and Mr. Buck. Have a fine time. Mr. Ford pleased with me and I with him. His interest in birds is keen, and his knowledge considerable. A lovable man. So is Glen Buck.

The Ford plant covers over 49 acres. The cars grow before your eyes, and every day a thousand of them issue from the rear.

In a letter dated June 7th he writes:

Yesterday morning I was coaxed down to the central high school, 'just to show myself to the young people — need not speak a word' — the old story. . . . I was led like a lamb to the slaughter. The room was packed with 2600 pupils, all excited and expectant. Such a clapping as there was when they saw me!

Mr. Mackenzie led me up on the wide platform, but Mr. Ford and Buck refused to follow, and left me to my fate. Prof. M. made a little speech in which he said things that made me feel serious. . . . Then one of the pupils recited 'Waiting.' . . . Then I had to get on my feet and say something, which I did with more success and less embarrassment than I expected. I spoke ten minutes and Buck and Ford said I spoke well. . . . Such genuine enthusiasm and appreciation from both pupils and teachers I never before experienced. . . .

We spent the rest of the day at Mr. Ford's farm . . . where he has an electric launch on a small river, and a big bungalow in the woods. . . .

I like Mr. Ford and his wife much. . . . His interest in the birds makes him forget everything else for the moment. He wants to give me more things — among them a closed car for winter use; but I told Buck to head him off. . . .

I must get home Friday to get ready for the Shea wedding [At Slabsides]. I hope you can see your way to come. Mrs. B. or Julian's folks will keep you. . . .

The Journal tells later of the arrival of the Kansas youth and maiden, and the mother of the latter, and of the marriage at the little woodland cabin.

The couple spent a part of the honeymoon at the cabin, then joined Mr. Burroughs and his family at Woodchuck Lodge, proving congenial and helpful housemates through the summer and autumn months.

That summer Mr. Burroughs and Julian took their first

[1] The superintendency of the estate of Colonel O. H. Payne, a mile up the river.

automobile ride from West Park to Roxbury. The day Julian leaves, his father has the following adventure:

In driving the car in the old barn, I get rattled and let it run wild; it bursts through the side of the barn like an explosion. There is a great splintering and rattling of boards and timbers, and the car stops with its forward axle hanging out over a drop of fifteen feet. As the wheels went out, the car dropped on its fly-wheel, and that saved me. The wheel caught on less than a foot from the edge; had it not, it would have landed at the foot of the steep hill, and I should have landed on the other side of Jordan. . . . The top of the radiator is badly crumpled, otherwise the car is unhurt.

I am terribly humiliated and, later, scared by my narrow escape. The thing I had feared for weeks happened. Thus does fear deliver us into the hands of the thing we fear.

After this mishap, he almost decided to abandon the car, saying the cantankerous beast would spoil his summer; that it was a false note in his life, and he would subdue it; but on July 1st he wrote:

Shea thinks he can learn to run the car and if I can find some one in the village to teach him, I will let him try. I must be free to let my eyes and thoughts roam when I go out in it. . . . Emily is coming on Thursday. . . . When shall we look for you?

Glimpses of his midsummer days are seen in these excerpts:

I am sitting in the hay-barn study. It is so cold I have the Jap stove in my lap, and my knees covered with your Middletown rug. Last week I wanted a piece of ice in my hand, and bare legs. The change began last night and blew me off the porch up into the hall bedroom.

Emily and the children and the Sheas went swimming down by the [Stratton] Falls. John is all boy. . . . Shea runs very carefully up and down these hills. . . . Mrs. Shea is a good cook and a delightful person to have around. . . . A snow-bird is again building in the hay-mow. Swallows have young in the peaks.

In late July, Mr. Burroughs sent off the last copy of his new volume, 'The Summit of the Years.' For a few days he was so lost without work that he took to swatting flies, thus earning the epithet 'our gray-crested fly-catcher.'

When the overflowing haymows made it imperative to find another place for writing, he built a little shelter in the upper orchard, above the Lodge, — Bush Camp — a fragrant bower, with the evergreen boughs woven in and out the pop-

lar poles which supported the canvas roof. Here he could look off toward Montgomery Hollow, and hobnob with the chipmunks. Here he wrote the essay 'Under the Apple Trees' (Harper's), the initial essay in the book by that title.

That season the springs were so low that water was hauled from a neighboring farm in milk-cans. In the midst of the drought the Fords and Bucks came on to take Mr. Burroughs on a motor trip through New England, but liked it so well they tarried a few days.

Mr. Ford was so restless that if he could find nothing else to do, he would clean out springs, or chop wood, or teach a young lad (D. H. J.) to run the car. When they came back from the first lesson, to the inquiry whether the lad had learned to manage the car, he said cheerily: 'Of course he did. I knew he could. Trust people more — that's all — they can always do more than you think they can.'

From Hotel Touraine, in early September, the Laird of the Lodge wrote at six-thirty in the morning:

Here we are in your beloved Boston. . . . Today we go back to Concord, stopping at Arlington to pick up Trowbridge.

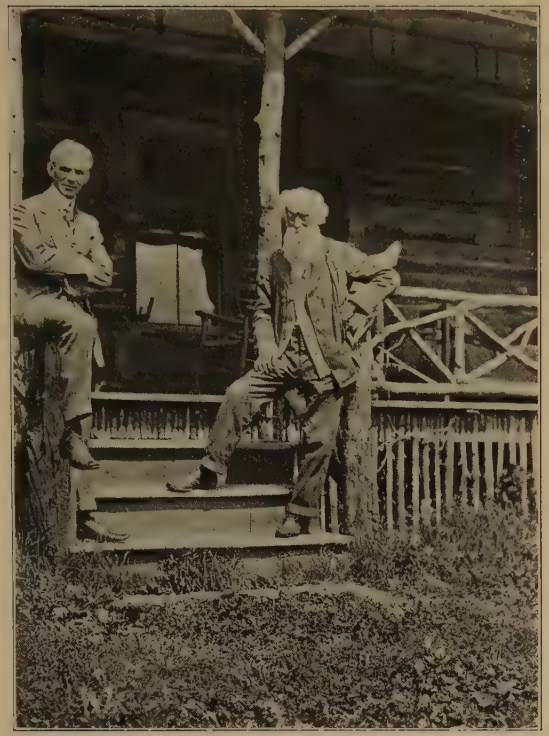
We called on Sanborn yesterday, and today he is to go about with us and lunch with us. . . . I hope you have had rain. They all talk much of their stay at W. L. . . .

On Saturday we passed the smoking ruins of a house and barn that had been struck by lightning the night before. The old man and his wife sat there under the trees looking pretty forlorn. Mr. Ford gave them a hundred dollar bill, which brought tears to their eyes and halting words of thanks to their lips. Then when he heard of the girl [their granddaughter] who had got ready to attend the high school this week, but whose clothes were now all burned up, he gave them another hundred, which did, indeed, astonish them, and made their tears flow afresh. . . .

Later, of Sanborn:

He is of the Emersonian type — tall, gaunt, deliberate, sharp-featured, stooping; with Emerson's manner and ways. A rather dry, lean nature, but an interesting man. . . . We drive about town, to Walden Pond, to Emerson's house. Spend some time there. Just as Emerson left it. Very impressive to me. His dining-room, his study, his library, his bedroom — all look like Emerson — the home of a scholar and thinker.

Spend an hour in Sleepy Hollow cemetery — the most beautiful cemetery I ever saw, a fit place for the last resting-place of Emerson, Hawthorne, Thoreau, and Alcott.



WITH HENRY FORD AT WOODCHUCK LODGE
1915

WITH THOMAS A. EDISON AT THE FORD ROCK
ROXBURY, 1916

Again from Boston:

To Country Club for lunch; then to Arlington to see . . . Nixon Waterman — a charming, lovable man, very humorous and bright. To theatre at night to see May Irwin — laugh a good deal.

Mr. Thomas A. Edison and his family called at the Lodge that summer. There in the little old parlor, with its old-time iron candle-stick and dipped bayberry candle on the mantelpiece, stood the inventor of the incandescent light, while we all hovered around, a-tiptoe with excitement, and watched his merry eyes as he talked with Uncle John, and his benevolent expression when he was silent.

In a letter to Dr. William T. Hornaday, dated October 12th, Mr. Burroughs asked for help to diagnose a sound unwonted in his native hills:

I thought I knew the natural history of my own part of the country pretty well until the other night I heard a cry that puzzles me. I dare say you can help me out. My neighbors who have heard the cry tell me it is a panther, but I don't believe a panther has been seen or heard hereabouts for a hundred years. I sleep on the porch here at Woodchuck Lodge. Last Wednesday night, near midnight, I was awakened by a cry or scream in the swamp about a hundred yards below me, the like of which I never before heard. It was a cry or scream so loud that I could distinctly hear the echo in the woods about 400 yards away, — a cry that tapered off into a long-drawn wail which for despondency and agony of soul I have never heard equalled. I can find no words suitable to describe its utter hopeless misery and longing. If a lost soul from Hades had been given a few hours' freedom, but had to be back on the striking of midnight, it might let off such a heart-breaking moan as I heard. It was a shrill, strident cry, ending in this long-drawn wail, full of the feeling of hopeless despair. The cry was repeated five or six times, then all was still; presently I heard the clock strike twelve. It was a still, hazy moonlight night. . . . I thought I could recognize the call or cry of any of the cat tribe, and I cannot believe that this was the cry of a puma. Have you heard it? This creature was not suffering from pain of body, but from agony of soul. . . .

If you can't help me, maybe Mr. Beebe can, or Thompson Seton. . . .

Dr. Hornaday was of the opinion that it was a puma, escaped from captivity, and calling for her mate; but when, later, he imitated the cry of the puma for Mr. Burroughs, the latter said it was not a whit like the cry he had heard. Two years later a ploughman in the West Settlement told him of

seeing a large, yellow, feline creature, with a short tail, come down out of the woods and later disappear into them; his description led Mr. Burroughs to think that it was a bay lynx, and that his mysterious night-screamer was of the same species.

Now and again his instinct for the truth caused Mr. Burroughs to challenge the genuineness of magazine contributions other than those of natural history. A characteristic letter is the following sent that autumn to the editor of the Atlantic Monthly:

> I am 'plumb' sure those letters of a 'woman homesteader' are not what they pretend to be. If they are, then their author has a remarkable talent for making a real thing appear like a make-believe thing. They are utterly lacking in verisimilitude. I grew more and more sceptical the farther I read, till I came to the last letter. That settled it for me. I know something about camping out, keeping fires all night, cooking game, etc., and that experience of 'Elinore' with her child in the mountains is a fake. It is like Cook's account of finding the Pole — too vague, too easy, too featureless. What a 'powerful' good time she had! The reality would have been quite different.
>
> I hope you have not been sold. I shall look through the next installment, and then stop. They are not interesting to me as fiction, and I get nothing from them if they are fact. Excuse me for being so frank.

The Journal that autumn has this significant entry:

> Draw writings with John [John C. Burroughs, his nephew], and receive the deed that makes the old place mine, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Ford.

The gift had come about as a result of a conversation between Mr. Ford and Mr. Shea, when the former had expressed the wish that he might do something for Mr. Burroughs. When the desirability of the place so loved by Mr. Burroughs becoming his was suggested, Mr. Ford had quickly responded, 'Nothing in the world easier — but don't tell any one about it'; whereupon steps were soon taken, and details arranged, with the consummation noted in the Journal. The place which he had for so many years struggled to keep in the family was at last his own. He arranged for his nephew to stay there and continue to run it as a dairy farm, he reserving Woodchuck Lodge for his own use.

As a result of the season now closing, he had essays in six of the autumn magazines and two other essays nearing completion.

During those autumn evenings at the Lodge, a favorite amusement was propounding test-words, and noting the associative reactions. The responses of Mr. Burroughs to two sets of test-words ordinarily used by psychologists may be found in the Appendix.

In New York, in mid-November, Mr. Burroughs posed to Pietro, the sculptor, for a bust,[1] which was presented, in the marble, to the American Museum of Natural History, and, in bronze, to Public School Number 188,[2] New York City, the donor of the busts requesting that his name be withheld.

Writing to Mr. Ripley Hitchcock, in December, Mr. Burroughs paid a tribute to one of his long-cherished friends:

> My conscience is ill at ease when I remember that I am not to be with you on the night of the eleventh to help do honor to my long time and true friend, Robert Underwood Johnson, a man who has done so much and in so many ways to earn the gratitude of all American men of letters.
>
> Mr. Johnson has had the honor of rejecting my manuscripts, and I have had the honor of requests from him for more manuscripts . . . — the returned manuscripts I always made better, and the request for new ones was always a spur to my laggard pen.
>
> Those of us who know how strenuously our friend has always served other interests than his own, heartily rejoice that he now has more leisure to give to the things which he has most at heart. It seems to me that this pause in the day's work is but the rest in the noon hour in the midst of the harvest. We shall now have more lyric poetry from him; a more determined fight for Hetch Hetchy under the generalship of John Muir; and new occasions to admire his zeal in the cause of civic righteousness. We need more such men to keep the public consciousness up to a high degree of alertness and efficiency. Some of us dream dreams, and forget our duty to the state; some of us cultivate philosophy, and hide from the questions of the hour; some of us write poetry, and are deaf to the muse of patriotism; some of us edit magazines, and public journals, and fail to say to the greed of commercialism, 'Get thee behind me, Satan'; but Mr. Johnson is a poet of rare delicacy and sweetness of tone, who is at home in the marts of men. He is a philosopher who shines in action. He was an editor who never faltered in his devotion to the true ideals of art and literature. May he live to write many more poems, and to win many more battles for civic ideals. . . .

[1] Reproduced in *The Breath of Life.*

[2] The school was later officially named 'The John Burroughs School'

In the autumn the question arose of my giving up my home at Pelham, and renting of Mr. Julian Burroughs his recently vacated cottage at Riverby. The decision made, Mr. Burroughs set going repairs on the cottage. Since his son had moved from there, the father had found it particularly lonely at Riverby with the bare windows of his son's cottage staring at him, and with Julian and the grandchildren a mile away. His letters now tell of progress in the repairs on the cottage, which he is superintending with zest.

To a friend in Saugerties, Miss Mary Freleigh, he wrote of his literary output for the year, adding, 'There's only one book in sight now, and that, I think, is the end of the story.' It must have been 'The Breath of Life' that was 'in sight.' It was the first of six more books to follow before 'the end of the story.'

In affectionate greeting he turns, with the waning year, to his old friend Trowbridge:

On the threshold of the New Year I send you my love and good wishes. I hope you are well and are facing the new year with your old cheerfulness. And Mrs. Trowbridge also.

I am well and find each day full of interest. My wife is out of sorts, but is mending. As soon as she is able to travel, we propose going to Washington, and in February to Georgia and Florida.

The Old Year has been kind to me, and I hope his successor will be so to both of us, and bring me again to your door, or you to mine.

CHAPTER XXX

MIGRATIONS

1914

Oh, friend, when comes the autumn-time of life,
And all the long days are with sadness rife;
When darkening clouds the sky of Hope bespread;
When half the golden dreams of youth have fled;
May we from all the fields that blossomed fair
Along the path of life, in beauty rare,
Rescue some Autumn garland's ripest boon —
A richer wreath than rims the cup of June.

MYRON B. BENTON

FROM Poughkeepsie came this New Year's greeting:

The first, and probably the only letter, my dear Comrade, I shall write on this first day of the blessed new year, shall be to you. My thoughts flow easily your way this morning, and I am very confident they will continue so to flow during this New Year and through all the years that remain for me. And I am very confident they often meet yours flowing my way, and that the two currents say to each other, 'Well met, and good-speed to you!'

Your letter came yesterday and I read it by the fire in the kitchen of the house that is being made ready for you.[1]

I am very well and am writing each morning, but not often hitting the mark I am wasting so much ammunition upon. I am like a fish-hawk that sometimes strikes his claws into a fish that he cannot unhook from. I have struck my claws into a fish that I cannot yet lift clear of the water, and I can't unhook. I should long ago have shared the fate of the hawk and have been drowned had I had an element like his to deal with. But fortunately my game inhabits a more ethereal medium, and I can take periods of rest.

Mrs. B. is slowly mending, but keeps rather weak, though her appetite is good enough. She thinks we cannot come to you on our way South — that it would be so much trouble with our two trunks, and would add so much to your burdens. I feel the same.

Good Housekeeping never used my Fabre paper. They have begun the publication of Fabre's work. They evidently had a poor opinion of my essay. They did not want an essay, but a spicy Introduction. . . . Good Housekeeping, of course, wants hot cakes for breakfast, and I never deal in them. . . .

May every day of the new year find you in tune with your better self, which, I suppose, means in tune with the Infinite. Love to the children.

[1] The cottage at Riverby.

The Journal briefly summarizes their sojourn in Washington, and excerpts from letters give interesting details:

[Journal.] . . . Stay there [Washington] till 30th, see old friends, drive about in a car Mr. Ford provides. . . . Work at Cosmos Club every morning. . . . Meet President Wilson. Hear him read a message to Congress — a fine impression of him; believe he will make a record. Mrs. B. keeps well. Dine out nine days in succession.

January letters contain these glimpses:

13th. On Sunday I went with a dozen teachers up the Potomac to their Slabsides . . . showed them how to bake the potatoes and broil the chops. . . . I am beginning to hear from my Bergson paper — very appreciative. . . . Am in the mood for writing now, if I can be let alone. . . . Mrs. B. joins me in love and good wishes.

Jan. 16. Yesterday Mr. Platt (M. C. from Poughkeepsie), came for me to meet the President. . . . The President was cordial. Our interview lasted only a few minutes. He looked fine. . . . He is a strong, impressive person — a new type in the presidency — a literary man in the White House. . . . His face is so fine and firm and elevated.

Mrs. B. is doing well, but when she went out alone got lost — had forgotten her number and the name of the street; a postman put her right.

Jan. 23. I hesitate to send you such a mass of stuff. Do it at your leisure. You will think I am crazy, but I am not. I think I have now got all this matter out of me. When it is all in type I can edit it and arrange it in two sections: 'As the Idealist Sees it,' and 'As the Man of Science Sees it.' . . . You will weary of it all, but when I am done, you will approve. . . .

I am going to send my 'Science and Literature' to the North American. . . .

I. In Georgia and Florida

From Experiment, Georgia, early in February:

Mrs. B. stood the journey as well as I did. . . . De Loach and his family were very glad to see us. . . . We have a big room on first floor, warmed by a Franklin stove which burns soft coal instead of wood. The house is chilly to us Northern furnace-tempered tenderfeet, but we will soon get used to it. Garden flowers are blooming, peach trees opening. De Loach has a pile of new books with which to bait me, and I see I am going to have a good time and do some work. The escape from the roar and thunder of Washington trolley-cars is a big relief. It is as quiet here as at Woodby.

Feb. 12. The Ms. came yesterday and your generous praise and criticism and comments all went to the point. I must work it over some. . . . Your proposed names are all suggestive. The Everlasting Riddle seems to be the best. [He named the essay 'An Ever Present Mystery.']

. . . The other day four prominent men of Griffin came up to ask me to permit the people of Griffin to give me a Georgia barbecue — a regular blow-out explosion of eloquence and champagne. I excused myself as gently as I could, but I am sure they went away disappointed. . . . They would have made me never want to come to Georgia again. I wonder at all this. I think it is in some way a reflection from Roosevelt. Surely my books could not inspire it.

I work in the morning, and we drive or receive callers in the afternoon. . . . The De Loaches are 'beginning to fix to get ready' to give a big dinner. I regret it, but they want to do it. The kindness and good-will of De Loach are inexhaustible. We have some (to me) stimulating talks here in his study at night when the others have retired. He knows some phases of biological and chemical science well. . . . His wife and Miss De L. are also very kind and attentive.

I think it is nearly time for you to advertise your place. The house is nearly finished. Maybe you better run up and make suggestions. . . .

Yesterday we sent the car back to town and De Loach and I took a five-mile walk. . . . I saw what a fraud the car is — how much it had cheated me out of. 'Afoot and lighthearted,' you are right down amid things. How they come home to you! How familiar and congenial the ground, the trees, the weeds, the road, the cattle look! The car puts me in false relations to all these things. I am puffed up. I am a traveler. I am in sympathy with nothing about me; but on foot I am a part of the country, and I get it into my blood. If it were not for Mrs. B. I should hang up the car. At any rate, I must have a walk every day of two or three miles.

[Journal] February 25. Here at Ft. Myers, Florida, with the Edisons and the Fords. . . . Midsummer weather. A real tropical scene; reminds me of Jamaica and Honolulu.

I can eat these oranges and grape-fruit. A cocoanut tree loaded with fruit out of my window. Pretty nearly an earthly paradise here, lacks only the mountains to lift one up toward heaven. Health good, mind active.

From Seminole Lodge, Fort Myers, he writes on March 2d:

. . . We begin the day so late here, and there are so many interruptions and diversions that I do little with my pen. I am as brown as a berry. So are we all — all but the few who are positively burned. Mr. Edison among the number. The sun here burns like the Honolulu sun.

We fish and sail and walk and motor and loaf on the broad verandas. Yesterday we returned from a two days' trip to a cypress forest 60 miles in the interior. . . . We slept in tents and dined and supped on wild turkey and venison. . . . We had two guides and a cook. Mr. Edison and Mr. Ford are as young as I am, but no younger. Mrs. Ford had a horror of snakes before her all the time, but is glad she went. We saw only harmless garter-snakes.

We hope to get a glimpse of the Everglades, but not go through them as we had planned, owing to the low water. . . .

. . . Out of the matter you copied I made up an article which I called 'A Bird of Passage,' and sent to Harper's. I hardly think it will stick. My 'Under the Apple Trees' is in the March Harper's. Is your book out yet?

Despite his fears, the Bird of Passage alighted on the 'Harper's' bough, and other essays about that time in the 'Yale Review.'

Though having many misgivings about my forthcoming book, I had trusted to his 'Autobiographical Sketches,' around which the rest was written, to leaven the whole lump. His comments, sent from Georgia were very comforting:

'Our Friend John Burroughs' came yesterday, and a very good-looking book it is, and a very agreeable person this J. B., as you portray him, proves to be. . . . I read it today coming through Georgia. If it were not all about me, I am sure I should feel that it is extremely well done. I am sure it is, anyhow. The Return to Pepacton I had not read before. It is bright and felicitous from beginning to end. The quotations are so happy and telling. . . . The 'Appreciation,' too, seems new to me, and much of the Muir chapter. . . .

He commented further in a later letter:

Mrs. B. read your book while I was in Florida. She said it made her nervous, you praise me so much, make such an ado over me. . . . It irritates her to hear me praised or made much of. She said last night: 'Do you think you deserve all that praise? If people only knew you as well as I do.' She is the one that deserves the praise. She really thinks she has made me. And my people — she thinks I have painted them in false colors. And my Mother: 'Did you really write that about your mother, or did *she* [C. B.] write it?' She delights in saying cruel things about my Mother; and how I could love her as I did is past her comprehension, — or could love my people as I did. She hated most of her people. . . .

We hope to start for home next week. . . . You must meet us in N.Y. and lunch with us.

De Loach and I are just back from La Grange, where we went to

visit the schools. They made such a pull on me I just had to go. . . . The enthusiasm away down here in Georgia is very surprising. . . . When I thought the show was over a big man stepped out before me with a new cane in his hand and began to orate. . . . He loaded me down with rhetorical flowers, and then presented the cane. I was 'stumped,' as the old people used to say, and my reply was brief. It is a silver-headed cane, just from the brand of the maker. The school children each contributed a penny towards its purchase. I asked Mrs. B. if I deserved all that pother and glorification. I told her I could not help it; that I felt very undeserving, but could not run away. I think it irritated her. . . . There was much more to it — the mayor and several of the first citizens escorted us down to the train and made quite a flourish. . . .

On his seventy-seventh birthday, at a luncheon with friends in New York, he promised to live ten years more — or die in the attempt.

About this time, at the request of the Ladies' Home Journal, he wrote an article, 'How I can do more Work at Seventy-Seven than at Forty-Seven.' When returning him the typed essay, I protested against the extent to which he had dwelt on the intestinal torpidity incident to old age — at a length corresponding to the whole thirty feet of the intestines; which protest, as will be noted in his reply, caused him to excise some of the long-drawn-out intestines, with details as to their care:

Your letter with the Ms. came this morning and I have not yet got over laughing. Every time I think of it I laugh. I am shaking now. I knew you would go for that 'gut.' How you did roll it under your tongue as a sweet morsel! (I am laughing so I can hardly see for the tears.) Your letter has done my own guts more good than all the remedies I have taken in a year. Such a shaking up! I was dizzy-headed yesterday and this morning, but these repeated explosions of laughter have dispelled it completely. Thank you, thank you!!! It is literally true that I have not had such a tempest of laughter for two years. You should see me shake, and the tears run down my cheeks! At the end of this sentence I nearly upset the table, I must stop.

I am cutting out some of the details, but I must leave in *one* gut. Let the editor cut that out if he wants to. . . .

The printed paragraph concerning the hygiene of the alimentary tract (after the recommended resection), read thus:

Our bodily life revolves around the digestive tract. We are built around a gut, and we are never for a moment to forget or ignore that

humble, not to say vulgar, fact. A man ideally nourished could defy all the hostile germs that surround him or lie in ambush in his own body. All I ask is the right food to eat, the right water to drink, the right air to breathe, the right amount of mental and physical exercise, and the proper social stimulants.

He also commented on his habits of sleep — in bed at nine, and up at six in winter, and in summer with the sun, thus having one part of the day with the dew on it. And is it not the dew on his work that gives it much of its charm?

As the time drew near when I was to move to Riverby, Mr. Burroughs urged me not to receive any more patients in my home, and so live a freer life:

Be willing to live on a smaller income, and add to your capital that way. With an income of $1,000 you can live here nicely and keep three of the children with you. We will keep a cow and share the milk with you, and maybe a few hens and some ducks. I shall plant your garden as soon as the ground is fit. . . .

When you do come here, you are to do less housework, and set to work at your *magnum opus*.

[Journal] May 9. Mr. Vanamee died last night. A friend for forty years. A man of much talent and many admirable traits. Books his dissipation. His library in Middletown was a resort of mine for many years. . . .

2. The Nest at Riverby

It is sadly interesting now to look over his letters written just before I moved to Riverby, and see how full of helpful suggestions they are; how he had visualized each room in the little cottage, with my belongings in place; had estimated how much space there would be for books — in fact, had got us cosily settled there at Riverby before we had dismantled the little home at Woodby. When the moving-van arrived, he and Mrs. Burroughs directed the husky movers in what rooms to place the heaviest pieces, so that there was already a semblance of order when I and my nieces reached there on May 21st, to begin life at 'The Nest.'

By the 1st of June John o' Birds and Mrs. John o' Birds began to dine and sup with us; and with the two birdlings within, and the wrens in their boxes on the veranda post, robins in the rosebushes, catbirds in the lilacs, wood thrushes in the maples,

THE NEST AT RIVERBY

orioles in the elms, and swifts in the chimney, the Nest was a nest indeed, before we realized it.[1]

It was a relief to find that Mr. Burroughs had the happy faculty of turning all his energy for the time being to helping solve various practical problems — for example, leaks in the new cistern (a tragedy in that dry season, and with an inadequate water-supply to begin with); and then, having done what he could to solve the difficulties, — fluid, physical, psychic, hydraulic, and astronomic, — to see him turn and immerse himself in his writing, thinking his thoughts about the cosmos in the midst of domestic distractions. When the oft recurring water-worry would arise, he would bestir himself to renewed efforts, saying cheerily, 'Keep up your courage — we will tap the Hudson, if need be.' We never tapped the Hudson, if we *were* on the verge of it. Well could we sympathize with the fate of poor Tantalus, with the enforced economy of water, and that lordly river flowing calmly at our feet! It was almost the only fly in the ointment, during those happy years in the Nest at Riverby.

[1] It was not until the following year that we lighted upon the name to replace the one ('Lovecote') that Julian and his bride had given the cottage when they had moved in twelve years before.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE SHADOW OF WAR

1914–1918

War! an arm'd race is advancing! the welcome for battle, no turning away;
War! be it weeks, months, or years, an arm'd race is advancing to welcome it.

Those corpses of young men,
. . . , those hearts pierced by the gray lead,
Cold and motionless as they seem, live elsewhere with unslaughtered vitality.
They live in other young men, O Kings!
They live in brothers again ready to defy you,
They were purified by death, they were taught and exalted.
Not a grave of the murder'd for freedom but grows seed for freedom, in its turn to bear seed,
Which the winds carry afar and re-sow, and the rains and the snows nourish.

WHITMAN

ALTHOUGH regarding uneasily for some years past the progressive militarism of Germany, Mr. Burroughs was nevertheless completely taken by surprise at the outbreak of the World War. In his 'Summit of the Years,' published a year before, he had said, 'Let those who love turmoil, arm for turmoil; their very arming will bring it; and let those who love peace, disarm for peace; the disarming will hasten it.' He was, however, quick enough to see that when they who were armed for turmoil made the attack, lovers of peace must engage in the combat. The whole strength of his personality promptly allied itself with the nations forced to grapple with the invader. He was pitifully agitated and distraught from the start, clearly foreseeing the spread of the conflagration, the long struggle, and the unutterable woe; but never, even in the darkest periods, did his faith waver or confidence in the triumph of right over might falter.

Lover of peace that he was, he became speedily transformed into an out-and-out militant. He could do little else than read the newspapers; was intolerant of interruption while so engaged, and exasperated at irrelevant conversation. At that period, guests at the Lodge must have gathered an impression of a crusty, belligerent being, quite at variance with the genial John o' Birds. His speech was often intemperately fierce, his mood increasingly vindictive. Sometimes he would

abruptly leave the veranda and his guests, and, resorting to the wood-pile, put into ringing blows with the ax the force he would like to have applied elsewhere.

He often asked for 'La Marseillaise.' One evening, when a chance guest, while playing other national airs, put on the record, 'Die Wacht am Rhein,' Mr. Burroughs instantly called out, 'Don't play that — I never want to hear that again!' But more than ever he wanted to hear Brahms's 'Cradle Song,' saying sometimes at its close, with tear-dimmed eyes, 'To think it was a German who wrote that divine thing!'

Unable to settle down to work, for weeks he made no entries in his Journal, and then this:

> Write a little, but not with much zest. The terrible War oppresses me. That war-drunk Kaiser my special detestation. He will bring ruin upon his country, and great injury to the whole world. But if the militarism of which he is the embodiment is crushed and cast out by the War, there will be a great gain.

Again he wrote, 'I wake up in the night and groan in spirit over the carnage'; and, on August 9th, to his friend Judge Talbot:

> I am greatly depressed over this horrible War. If I could forge my pen into a sword and run it through that world-scoundrel, the German Kaiser, a few times, I think my liver would turn over and wake up. I cherish one hope — that the War will put an end to militarism, and that every crowned head on the continent will fall. I can see no other good likely to come out of it, while such an eruption of barbarism is likely to set back the civilization of the whole world. Think of it! Christian nations going for one another's throats in this way! The truth is, Christianity as it affects the policy of nations, is barely a whitewash. It only makes the shedding of blood more noticeable. My sympathies are naturally with the Germanic peoples as against the Russian despotism, but that conceited, rattle-brained German Emperor has always stirred up my contempt and wrath. . . .

He did manage to finish a paper in August, begun long before, 'Life and Mind' ('The Breath of Life'), which he sent to the 'North American Review'; but when not reading the newspapers, he occupied himself chiefly with building a reservoir at the Lodge. Writing to Miss Edna Albert in September, he said:

> . . . Your nice interesting letter found me in better health and in better humor than when you were here. I am more reconciled to the

War. . . . If the Allies are victorious — and they must be — it will be the death of militarism, and all armaments will dwindle instead of increase as they have the past 40 years, and thus an enormous burden be taken from the people. Half the money spent for armaments every year among Christian nations would greatly ameliorate the condition of all classes of people, and banish many of the most cruel diseases from the world.

We are about the same as when you were here, except Miss Baxter is gone, and my wife returns home today. Doctor B. has a patient, a pleasant, non-troublesome woman. . . . On Monday we climbed the mountain at the head of Montgomery Hollow, which has challenged me all my life; but we plucked the heart out of the mystery. Three of us climbed a tree on the tree-covered summit, forty feet high, and had a view that quickened the pulse. . . .

It was about this time that he began writing letters about the War to the New York dailies. Concerning one of these a prominent educator wrote him, 'Your arraignment of the crimes of Germany will go down, nay, has already gone down, in history, as the crystallized sentiment of the American people.' The letters that came to him all through the War showed how gratefully these utterances of his were received by a perturbed people. They helped them to see clearly, to think clearly, and to hope unswervingly for the triumph of right. In his public letters there was seldom a hint of the hasty, sometimes ill-considered, spoken comments which he made when angered by fresh developments; but clear-sighted statements with no lack of eloquent, though tempered, denunciation. There were doubtless few men in America upon whom the War had a more depressing effect, — a really disintegrating effect upon his health. It inhibited his writing, except upon war or allied topics. For a time his liking for the German people was turned to gall. One sometimes actually shuddered at his imprecations. When the news came of the shelling of Rheims cathedral, he was almost beside himself with rage and consternation. No callers went away from the Lodge in that period of enjoined 'neutrality' without finding out just where he stood; while he sometimes openly catechized them as to where they stood. One day after a caller left he said, shrewdly, 'I think he was pro-German, but I gave him a good dose.'

[Journal] September 20. Reading 'Pan-Germanism' and much impressed by it. I did not dream of such scheming, such jealousies, such rivalries and animosities among the nations of our own day.

Civilization seems to have done nothing toward eradicating greed and selfishness among the races. For nations to live together as brothers and neighbors seems out of the question.

His activities and interests may be further traced in a letter written September 23d to Mr. Henry Ford:

I often think of you these days and wonder if you are having as good a time as I am — a good time that I owe to you. We are cleaning up the field below the barn and I take a hand prying rocks and digging stone. . . . It just begins to seem to me that I really own the farm. There are no title-deeds like those one earns by the sweat of his brow. . . . How the work brings back the days I helped Father dig rocks and stones! I know I am having some of the satisfaction he would have had in cleaning up this field. Many of the rocks we blow up with dynamite. They have lain here in their earth-beds for one hundred- or two hundred-thousand years, or since the great ice-sheet dropped them and tucked them up in their beds. How quickly and rudely we wake them up and often turn them completely out of bed. Some of the big fire-stone rocks we have to drill.

Our job is more than half finished. It will make the banner-field of the farm. I am naming it in honor of you, and shall carve 'The Henry Ford Field' on a rock.

The woodchuck population has diminished since the rifle came. I got five with six shots, and one cat that has lived on our birds and chipmunks. . . . The gun shoots to the left and I must have the sight changed. . . .

There are only three of us here now. The Doctor has a patient — one she had two years ago — pays well, and is not much trouble. My wife began to worry about her house and went home ten days ago.

If you want a very readable book that throws a flood of light on the causes of the War, ask Mr. Pratt to send you 'Pan-Germanism.' . . . Think of the bill that nation will have to pay! It will stagger the world. If their empire is not dismembered, they will be lucky. Their ambition is to Germanize the world and rule over us all; but that would be too much of a good thing. The German world is all right where it is, but we want an English and French and American world also, and I think we will have it.

In October he writes to a zealous friend anent equal suffrage:

Dear Mrs. Vanamee,

. . . I have always been a 'Women's Rights' man, or ever since I read Higginson's paper in the Atlantic Monthly over fifty years ago on the question, 'Shall Women Learn the Alphabet?' [1]

Well, she has learned the alphabet, and she can learn the political alphabet, and the alphabet on civic duties just as easily, and keep

[1] 'Ought Women to Learn the Alphabet,' Higginson: *Atlantic*, February, 1859.

pace with her brothers in the great school of the world, as she did in the class-room.

I would gladly see women possess all the rights I possess, and enjoy them all, if they can. The suffrage would greatly widen the field of her interests and emancipate her in a measure from the tyranny of purely domestic affairs. It would cure women of a certain provincialism which often causes men to laugh at them when they ask questions about public matters, or appear as witnesses in the court-room. It is alone this narrow circle in which the life of the average woman revolves that makes her less broad-minded, and more readily the victim of fads and fashions, and of half-truths, than are her male associates.

In our day the superstition, which dates back to the dark ages, that women must live in a world of their own, a more hidden, secluded, and exceptional world than do men, is exploded. Women are fast acquiring the open-air habit, both in body and mind. They are men's dolls and playthings no more. They are putting men on their mettle as mountain climbers and explorers; and holding their own with them in many fields of business activity. Why should we hesitate to let them share in all our civil and political duties and obligations?

On November 1st there appeared in the 'New York Tribune' one of Mr. Burroughs's earnest and eloquent letters about the War, a few paragraphs of which follow:

Who can ever forget those early August days! One of the most efficient and admirable people the world has ever seen in the grip of a merciless military autocracy, welded and hardened into such a weapon of destruction as the world had never before seen, and aimed at a neighboring nation which would have been glad enough to have lived forever at peace with all the world. Poor La Belle France! How has she been sinned against both by her own rulers, and the rulers of other nations! And little Belgium — who dared to bar her doors against the titanic nation-despoiler and robber, and who now lies prostrate, bleeding and famishing! Her wrongs cry to heaven....

We saw German militarism springing with a tiger's bound for the blood and life of a neighboring people whose only offence was that they had for a generation been making ready to try to ward off such an attack; we saw a small, peace-loving, industrious, inoffensive people, whose territory lay in the way of this fierce onrush of the Germans, trampled and murdered and despoiled, their villages and cities burned, their farms laid waste, their treasures of art and architecture consumed, their gold and silver demanded — we saw, and still see, millions of as worthy and likable people as there are in the world homeless, foodless, swept before and trampled upon by invading armies like autumn leaves, and we heard the cry for mercy and succor that went up from them, and it still rings in our ears.

... We saw the vast military power of Germany loosened, as if it

had long been straining at the leash, as it had; we saw it eager and ready, — the readiness that is the fruit of long premeditation and preparation. . . . How remorseless and resistless it swept on. How the gods of War must have made their Valhalla ring with approval. . . .

Is it any wonder that we in this country gave our sympathy without measure to the Allies and their cause? We instinctively look upon the German army as simply a vast machine rushing with blind fury upon the civilization of the world. We do not think of its individual units as made up of the altogether modest, industrious humane and admirable people of whom we know so many. We see nothing human in it; we see nothing admirable but its terrible efficiency. . . . It is not expressive of the spirit of the Germany that we know — the Germany to which we owe so much in literature, in music, in philosophy, in science, and in the art of rational living, the Germany of Goethe, Schiller, Kant, Hegel, and a hundred others. It is rather the outcome of the Germany of the blood-and-iron Bismarck . . . of the tense, abnormal Nietzsche, and of the hard, calculating Bernhardi, and of her ruling classes — the hellish gospel that might makes right, that small nations have no rights which great nations are bound to respect, . . . the gospel of armed conquest, of the robber baron, of the pirate on land or sea; a gospel which sneers at treaties as scraps of paper, and throws international morality to the winds. . . .

In late December, from Yama Farms Inn, at Napanoch, New York, he wrote Miss Mary Freleigh of his snug quarters:

Your greeting found us here where we are invited guests as long as we will stay. We may stay till February and then go on to Georgia. Dr. Barrus is here also. They wanted her as house physician, and Mrs. B. and me as fireside ornaments.

It is an ideal spot. . . . I have 'the Hut' all to myself, — a larger, finer Slabsides, with open fires, radiators, electric lights, and walls lined with books. And I am allowed to saw and split my own wood. The Inn, where I go for meals, and to rub against people, is three minutes' walk away. I can work here and feel at home. Mrs. B. thrives here, and so does the Doctor. . . .

This hellish war upsets me a good deal, but I hope to live through it. . . .

After attending an anti-cat meeting in Brooklyn, he wrote in his Journal, 'Poor Puss fares badly.' On his return, while entertaining the guests around the fireplace at the Inn with details of the vigorous campaign being waged against cats as dangerous pets for children — carriers of disease — and destroyers of the birds, he admitted: 'It is a fact, you can't have both cats and birds. I used to have a cat at Slabsides (Silly

Sally), but she would dabble in ornithology, and when she died I decided never to have another.' He told of an irate woman who berated him after the meeting for sitting on the platform — he, a lover of all animal life! — while such propaganda was being circulated against the cat! Not that he loved cats less, but birds more, for all the time that he was telling of the anti-cat warfare, the pet cat at the Inn was nestling in his lap, and he was gently stroking it!

His letter to the 'Tribune,' already quoted from, called forth protests from University professors in Wurzburg and Jena. One begged him to defer judgment till he could get the right historical perspective; the other accused him of naïve ignorance of the whole European situation. To one of these protests, he replied:

I know how you educated Germans feel about the War, and the last thing I should think of doing would be to try to change your minds. If I had been born in Germany, and brought up to revere the State and the Army, as you all were, I should doubtless feel the same. . . . Then you are a vital part of the matter in dispute, and cannot see it as an outsider can.

We flatter ourselves that we see this terrible tragedy of the nations as history will see it — from a distance and without prejudice. . . . Naturally my own sympathies would be with your people. I like the Germans. . . .

You are masters in all fields — certainly in the art of war. That you have cultivated the art of war so assiduously, and were such masters of it, made you so ready and eager to strike the first blow. . . .

You are wide of the mark when you say we have taken our cue from Great Britain. We judge for ourselves. We see what Germany did, and the spirit that animates her — the war spirit in its most rabid form — and that is enough. German culture is a fine thing, but you are not going to be allowed to plough and harrow the world to plant German *Kultur* in it. I doubt very much if you are even allowed to plant it in little Belgium, though your army has certainly ploughed under all other culture there. . . .

But I must not weary you nor irritate you. Not a heart in America but feels for the German *people* spilling their blood in such torrents, and all so needlessly.

Christmas morning at the Inn was saddened unspeakably by tidings of the death of Mr. Muir. He wrote in his Journal:

An event I have been expecting and dreading for more than a year. . . . A unique character — greater as a talker than as a writer — he loved personal combat and shone in it. He hated writing and composed with difficulty, though his books have charm of style; but

his talk came easily and showed him at his best. I shall greatly miss him. . . .

That evening around the fire, an informal memorial meeting to John o' Mountains was held by host and guests. Mr. Burroughs talked of their days together in Alaska, and Mrs. Sarre read from Mr. Muir's writings, also the chapter 'Camping and Tramping with Burroughs and Muir' in 'Our Friend John Burroughs.'

The death of John Muir [he wrote a friend] has made California seem very dark and deserted. My heart turns longingly to California every winter, but with Muir and Browne gone, how can I go there again?

Early in the New Year he sent off another stirring letter to the 'Tribune'; he sat for an etching to Miss Mathilde de Cordoba, and for diversion joined the young people in their coasting parties. Mrs. Burroughs could not be induced to try the coasting, but could be seen of a sunny day, on a hand-sled, being drawn about the drives by her white-haired husband.

Alluding to the accusation by the German professor that he was judging Germany too soon, Mr. Burroughs pointed out, in the just-mentioned letter to the 'New York Tribune,' that it was not necessary to know all the diplomatic and political history that led up to the War to form a just judgment, that the events themselves were sufficient, and added:

Belgium's wrongs and Germany's crimes are present day facts, and the lapse of time can never make them less. Time will soften or blur the harshness and the terrible reality of these events, but the murder and spoliation of this admirable and peaceful little state, just because she was little, will ever remain one of the blackest pages of modern history. No plea of dire necessity, no conjuring with right and wrong, can palliate the crime. When the impartial history of the world comes to be written, the blood and famine of this neutral and peaceful people will strike through and through its pages, like some indelible and infernal stain.

Upon his countrymen he enjoined forbearance with England in her course on the high seas, since she had everything at stake, and was fighting our battles for us, while we had at stake only the big profits of some of our monopolies — an opinion which led an anonymous correspondent (in script which betrayed its Teutonic descent), to berate him, and

accuse him of being in the pay of the British Government! Over this and other anonymous communications, he exulted, saying, 'It shows my letters are getting under their skins.'

From Experiment, Georgia, he wrote on February 18th:

I sent off the final chapters of my book last week ['The Breath of Life']. . . . I shall not do any more writing, if I can help it, during this month. I need a holiday. I feel as if that tobacco smoke at the Inn was not all out of my system yet. . . .

Robert Loveman was here yesterday. . . . He has a very easy, unhurried air. Does not look like a poet at first glance, but does on closer scrutiny. He is a dreamer all right, and a great lover of Nature, including humanity. He was born in Cleveland fifty years ago, of Hungarian parents. He is rather dark and short, with a strong face, a little suggestive of the Jewish type. He seems very much at ease in the world. . . . When I told him that I had just read in Emerson's Journal that the first edition of his essay on 'Nature' was only 500 copies, and that a second edition was not called for in 13 years, that seemed to please him.

I think Loveman is by far the greatest poet the South has produced. Lanier was more of a craftsman — had a much greater command of the art of verse-making, but he set no such deep ideas to music. Loveman's Rain Song is as perfect and real as a rose or a violet. It is as sure of immortality as any poem of the last hundred years. It is one of those felicitous strokes that rarely come, even to great poets.

I still receive letters about my Tribune letter [of January 15]. Two from England yesterday, good ones, one from a poet. One from Mrs. Edison tells how much Edison liked it. One also from Mrs. Ford.

Commenting to Miss Evelyn Craig on his forthcoming book, he said:

[It] will lead you into deep waters. Keep on your orthodox life-preserver. The drift of it you will find in the chapter called, 'A Bird of Passage.' You might like the one called 'A Wonderful World.'

[Journal] March 4. Return of my old trouble [auto-intoxication]. . . .

Two abusive letters this morning from pro-Germans — one very bitter, anonymous — wants me shot from the end of a torpedo. What is it all about? I don't know. The N.Y. Journal seems to have been making me say something.

One of these letters, so brutal it made one shudder, followed a newspaper report which had outrageously garbled something Mr. Burroughs had said about Mr. Bernard Shaw. In a

kind of frying-pan-to-fire defense, he declares: 'I did not get off that low abuse [about Shaw] at the end. That was his [the reporter's] own. Damn Shaw anyway. He is a diabolical cuss — a flippant, egotistical, sharp-tongued Irishman.'

He tells of writing a bird essay for the 'Youth's Companion,' and of one, 'Dame Nature and Her Children,' being in the issue of March 15th; tells of climbing Stone Mountain — 'probably the biggest single granite lump in the world.' He is also writing of the birds he sees from his window, naming the essay 'Old Friends in New Places.'[1]

We celebrated the seventy-eighth birthday at the Nest, Julian and family joining us. When a rosy-cheeked Swedish girl was found to help with the housework, Mr. Burroughs said he guessed we had found 'the angel to do the housework' which Emerson was ever seeking, an opinion which was confirmed when, with her help, the bark study was cleaned without his placidity being roiled. A week later he consented to the invasion of Slabsides for the same purpose, even motoring us over there with lunch-basket and the necessary evils — mop and brush and broom, — where, after making a fire and bringing water, he left us to work our will upon the cabin, while he hobnobbed with chickadees and turtle doves till time to roast the potatoes and broil the chops — his self-appointed task.

He himself helped scrub from window-sashes and door-jambs the names of visitors which defaced every available space. He *un*writ, as it were, their names in water, save those cut deep in the wood, which were otherwise obliterated.

[Journal] April 11. Lounsbury died suddenly two days ago. A lovable man. . . . My last word and talk with him last November. He told me his heart was his weak point. He would not hurry to catch a street car, as I was inclined to do. . . .

Hopkinson Smith died also, at same age, 77. . . . Smith orated when he talked. Peace to their ashes! Both should have lived to see the end of the War.

In early May, on starting for the city, he said, characteristically, 'I would rather stay here and watch the wrens building, but the Edisons have been so kind to me, I must show my white top-knot on this occasion.'

[1] *Harper's*, and *Under the Apple Trees*.

[Journal] May 6. . . . Go to Edison's . . . and then to N.Y. to the Civic Forum function in honor of Edison. Mr. Ford sits by me on the platform. I sit next Edison. An interesting ceremony. Much speech-making, but Edison will not say a word. The gold medal presented him is large and fine. Edison hates all the talk and palaver — the whole thing a bore to him. . . .

May 7. Mr. Ford comes home with me, after seeing Dr. —— in P——, the first doctor he ever consulted. The Doctor found him sound, only a little sluggishness of the liver.[1]

8. Off this morning with Mr. Ford to Sing Sing. Visit Osborne and the prison. Go through the prison and see the 1800 march to dinner — the rag-tag and bob-tail of humanity — very depressing to look at their crude, unfinished faces. Not one in ten with any foundation for character-building. But an atmosphere of content seems to pervade the place. Osborne a great success — treats the prisoners as human beings, and gives every man a show. Incredible that for ages the State should have aimed to punish and torment its prisoners, instead of trying to make better men of them. Osborne has abolished nearly all guards and spies, and tries to let the men govern themselves.

Mr. Ford and I both had to make little speeches in the big dining-hall. How they did clap Mr. Ford! He said he had never made a speech in his life. He was much embarrassed — only spoke a dozen words.[2]

Writing Miss Gertrude Ballard of his visit to the prisoners, he said understandingly:

They reminded me of the nubbins, or hog-corn, we used to cull out when we husked the corn; and are probably the result of the same aborted or hindering conditions of growth and development.

Again, from Slabsides, on May 11th:

I came over here yesterday to this green solitude to refresh myself once more with its spirit of calm and seclusion. I have knocked about a good deal lately and seen many people, and got a bit out of tune with myself. I feel that the gentle divinities of Slabsides will put me right again. The rarer birds are here and the yellow cypripedium is in bloom near my door. This morning I hear the water thrush, and last night the whippoorwill called for the first time. The

[1] The news of the sinking of the Lusitania came while they were in Poughkeepsie, but though so greatly upset by it, he makes no mention of it in the Journal.

[2] On telling of this he said that Mr. Ford in his embarrassment said to the men, 'I am very glad to see you here.' He himself told the men that it was their bad luck that they were there, and probably his good luck that he was not there, which made them laugh.

phœbes have built in a niche in the rocks at the entrance to my cave, and the mellow thunder of the chimney swifts is heard in my chimney. I want to spend the week here, and more, too, if Fate will allow me.

One day in late May, handing me a few sheets on which he had pencilled the following comments, Mr. Burroughs said, 'Something for your book':

Life is worth living as long as one feels an interest in life, and I expect to feel an interest in life as long as I keep well and have work I want to do. . . . I keep well by attending to the physical machine as carefully as I do my Ford car, and when it runs well, joy in work follows.

As an invalid I should simply cumber the ground, and with no more essays to write, and no more walks to take, the days would indeed be blank. My delight in nature is as keen as ever it was, and my interest in science increases with the years.

At 78 there is an inevitable falling off of interest in some fields of our activities. I am not so ready to go a-fishing as I used to be, and I no longer have to run when I get in sight of the trout-streams. I do not read books with the same avidity I used to; and I was never a great newspaper reader until the present time, and now can read little else.

My interest in this World War is much keener than it could have been in such a catastrophe at any earlier period of my life, and I am praying that my sands may not all run out before it is ended and I see German militarism crushed, and the German people brought to a realizing sense of the fact that the rights and the lives of other peoples are as sacred as their own.

Age does this for us: it widens the field of our interests, and intensifies them in certain directions; it intensifies the humanitarian side of our natures. If our local interests fail, our world interests increase. At least, such has been my own experience.

For a short time in early June, while Mrs. Burroughs had a maid for the annual house-cleaning, they took their meals in their own dwelling-house, the resulting reduction in household demands at the Nest admitting of a beginning of this work ('Life and Letters'). It was, however, speedily interrupted: As I sat writing on the veranda, one day, Mr. Burroughs came up the steps, bringing some strawberries which he had just gathered from the garden, sank into a chair, deathly pale, and almost collapsed — the heart's action having suddenly become alarmingly feeble. (He had been ailing with malaise and tonsillitis for several days previous.) It was the beginning of a

long, serious illness, during which the veranda was converted into an outdoor hospital, where he remained during the month of June.

'I had a pretty close call, I guess,' he said some days later; and he sent for Judge Clearwater, of Kingston, to execute his will.

In time he was able to dictate letters, and to receive brief visits from friends, among whom were Mr. R. U. Johnson, Dr. and Mrs. Smith Baker, the Roofs, Mrs. O. Rouland, and Mr. Timothy Cole. The last day of June he took a short walk on the grass, and a ride in the car. He was delighted to find that during his illness the car had been equipped with a self-starter. Up to this time he had cranked his car, an exertion out of the question thereafter.

With old friends at Sachem's Head, Connecticut, for ten days in July, he rapidly regained strength. The day he set out on the Hudson, elated with the sense of returned health, he spoke of what a fortunate life his had been; and, after instancing many narrow escapes from accident and death, and many strokes of good fortune, said, 'Yes, my name should certainly have been "Felix." When you publish your life of J. B., you must have for a sub-title, "A Joyous Life."'

'Wouldn't "contented" be better than "joyous"?'

'No, it has been joyous. I have had joy in the birds, in books, in friends, in life itself, and in the whole universe — "joyous" is none too strong a word.'

One midsummer day, at Roxbury, after reading the paper, despondent over the repeated successes of Germany, he said, 'Have the trees and rocks in Germany turned to men?' Once, referring to Whitman's opinions of Germany in her earlier struggles with France, he said:

> Walt *could* sometimes be scathing and denunciatory, in spite of all his tolerance. . . .
>
> In the Franco-German War I tried to defend Germany, but he was like a lion — he was for France — he squelched me in a hurry. *I* felt so because I hated that sham Napoleon, but Walt looked deeper. He saw Prussianism — that mailèd fist — and how he hated it! His instincts were infallible. He knew the French as I did not, and he knew that Emperor William stood for tyranny and ruthlessness, as we know it now; and that Germany was then preparing the world for this Noah's flood of blood — damn them! — I can't help but use my 'damns' when I think of it.

If callers at the Lodge failed to talk about topics in which he was interested, Mr. Burroughs usually brought them round to such, chiefly about the War, and world-questions; but he also talked of whatever else was absorbing him — perhaps the number of 'chucks he had killed; the quality of his golden bantam corn; the size of his Hubbard squashes; the new book; the new poet; his food fads; how puzzled he was as to how the chipmunk gets such huge stones out of the small door of his den; or, maybe, details as to his efforts at road-mending. Perhaps some callers went away disappointed that he had not chosen loftier themes, like a visitor to Wordsworth who came just after the poet had been re-graveling his garden-paths, and was entertained by his discussion of the respective value of various kinds of gravel.

The third and last honorary degree conferred upon Mr. Burroughs was conferred that year (his acquiescence being solely to please a friend whose heart was set upon it) — the degree of Doctor of Letters, by the University of Georgia. He did not go to Georgia to receive it. It is said that when his name was announced, — 'John Burroughs, of New York,' — some one on the platform called out, 'Say John Burroughs of the world!'

1. A Restive Subject

In mid-August came Pietro, the Italian sculptor (with his assistant, Vacarro), to whom Mr. Burroughs gave over the remainder of the month, posing for a bust, and a sitting statue of heroic size.

Some delightful and amusing memories cluster around the modeling of the statue. In that glorious open-air studio, on the rock on which he had played as a boy, dreamed as a youth, and to which he had returned every summer of his life, the sitter rested and looked off across the wide valley to the blue heights beyond. The pose is easy and characteristic: his right hand rests upon the rock, the left shades the eyes. It is not only John Burroughs, the nature-lover, on his native heath, overlooking the landscape he loves best in all the world, but it has a symbolical significance as well, seeming to depict one whose vision includes the universe; who sees the wonders that have been, that now are, and that will be. It is the Seer.

To the making of the statue, however, went many a tedious

hour, and the sculptor was often at his wit's end to devise means for chaining the unwilling sitter to the rock. Many an afternoon we congregated on the rock and read from Mark Twain's 'Jeanne d'Arc' to beguile the restive subject. Sometimes a friend would support his elbow, for the pose of that uplifted arm was wearisome. Once when the sculptor was hurrying to finish the feet, his sitter declared he would pose no more that blessed day; whereupon one of the group obligingly put on his shoes, that the work need not suffer interruption, saying it would be her only chance to stand in John Burroughs's shoes. Sometimes the prophetic look of the sitter would suddenly give way to that of the sharp-shooter and, seizing his rifle, within easy reach (to use on the sculptor, he said, in case he became inexorable), the immobile Seer would, in a twinkling, be over the hill and far away after a 'chuck.

The many 'pilgrims' coming to the Lodge would climb to the pasture studio and look on in interested wonder as the clay man grew under the sculptor's hands. The goldfinches swinging over the field, the indigo-birds with a nest near by, the crows that clamored in the beechwoods, the chipmunks scampering on the stone fences, and the cattle grazing near, all helped to relieve the tedium of the sitter, yet nothing could make the long-drawn-out process anything but irksome.

The figure soon became so lifelike that on getting a sudden glimpse of it from the road below, one almost pitied it, sitting up there exposed to the cold and rain of some very un-August-like weather.

One morning before the sitter had climbed to his seat of torture, we at the Lodge heard wild, discordant yells drifting down from the pasture where, the night before, the sculptor had left the statue almost completed. Looking up there, we saw the sculptor and his assistant apparently gone daft — they were rushing wildly about, throwing sticks and stones, and yelling like maniacs, while the usually unperturbed cows were jumping and cavorting to escape their missiles. Breathlessly hurrying to the Rock, we found the incoherent rage of the sculptor justified. The browsing cattle had eaten off the carefully modeled feet of the clay man, clean above the ankles, trampling what they had not eaten! Considering the difficulties under which those feet had been made, the delays at crucial points from rainy days, the impatience bordering on

rebellion of the sitter, the all-but-despair of the artist, this was indeed a tragedy. It seemed, too, an indignity to the subject, and a desecration to the work of art.

As we stood around ruefully regarding the havoc wrought and silently commiserating with the discomfited artist, Mr. Burroughs himself, looking deeply concerned, turned suddenly and, glancing anxiously about the field, inquired, 'Do you suppose they ate enough clay to poison them?' Not the despair of the artist at the mutilation, not even self-pity at thought of further sittings — his whole concern lest the clay diet harm the cows!

One day out in front of the veranda, the sculptor was making some last touches to the bust before casting it in plaster, when it began to rain. Callers arriving were amused to see the sitter, docile, posing on the lawn, Vacarro holding an umbrella over him, while the sculptor rapidly worked on the clay model.

Shortly before the completion of the large statue, the sitter went away for over Sunday. Not to be outdone, the sculptor said, 'I will do him, even if he has run away.' And with a small pile of clay, he started a statuette on the veranda, at first in jest, merely playing with the clay, getting his revenge by putting his subject in absurd poses; but later, working in earnest, soon, to the onlooker's amazement, the little figure began to live, becoming uncannily like the absent subject. On return, mystified to be confronted by himself, and relieved at having escaped posing for it, Mr. Burroughs willingly consented to the short pose necessary to complete the work.[1]

Writing his son in late August, Mr. Burroughs said:

> Pietro left Thursday. He took away three J. B.'s in plaster.... Ida Tarbell came on Tuesday. We enjoy her much. I have never known a woman with quite so clear and strong a mind. Her ideas are as real and tangible as apples on a tree, and she has lots of them. The minds of few men are so free from sham and nonsense.... Today we go down to Mrs. [Finley J.] Shepard's to lunch.... We do not yet know when the Fords are coming....
>
> The Russians are pretty well knocked out, and I shall not regret it if it results in the downfall of that despotism, and the freedom of Poland. The Allies can win without her [Russia] if the Balkan states join them....

One day, indicating a copy of J. W. Alexander's Whitman,

[1] This standing statuette was named, 'The Summit of the Years,' and is owned by Mr. Henry Ford. The 'Seer' is owned by the city of Toledo.

Mr. Burroughs said, 'Take it down. It is a castrated Whitman — a Boston Whitman.' He was as frankly critical concerning endeavors to portray himself — after the various efforts 'got cold,' especially when not obliged to temper his criticisms to the feelings of the artist. He suffered many things of many painters, a few etchers, and at least four sculptors. It was always interesting, often amusing, to watch the work progress. Each artist would begin as though he had an easy task, soon to find that, however readily he got 'a likeness' the 'little more' needed to make the work live, somehow eluded him. When to the various requests he would say amiably, 'Yes, you may paint me — if you will do it in a few sittings,' it came, in time, to suggest the remark of Socrates, 'You may bury me — *if you can catch me.*' Results were sometimes satisfactory, sometimes painful. Only rarely was one convincingly good; and though many portrayals possess certain excellences, a truly representative and interpretive portrait of him was, in my opinion, never achieved. Almost always his too ready consent to pose gave way to a restiveness that made him a difficult subject just as the work was well begun. 'I won't be pestered by him any more,' he would declare vehemently — 'frittering away my time like that!' and he would remain as firm as adamant — until the next intriguing overtures from that, or another, quarter.

When, in 1909, on the Pacific coast, he lightly consented to sit to a young woman, the result was so deplorable that, on seeing it, he said he was ashamed to face the poor girl. A few days later she sent him a birthday cake which she herself had made — an excellent cake. 'I must write Miss —— a note of thanks for you,' I said to him. 'What shall I say to her?'

'Tell her, for Heaven's sake, *to make cake* and let the painting go.'

Once when looking at a certain representation of himself he asked in dismay, 'Great Scott! do I look like *that?*' Of another: 'That looks like a caricature. Can you see me in *that?*' (as if afraid of being answered in the affirmative). '—— has my clothes, my hair and beard — no one could do them better — and I suppose it looks like me, but it is a wooden man.' Of another by the same artist: 'That may be the man my neighbors know, — the farmer J. B., — but I would like to see some of them get the man that wrote the books.'

When another portrait was in progress he wrote: '—— has inveigled me into sitting again. His friends, as usual, are enthusiastic — but — I don't know — I suppose I can't judge myself. . . . He's a good fellow, and I like him, but he is not the great painter he thinks he is.' Of a certain pastel he said: '——'s picture is good — I guess; but she has made me look like a saint — it looks more like Lyman Abbott than me. —— says it has no "guts," but then he never speaks well of another artist's work.'

'That head is like a Roman emperor,' he declared of one of the busts of him. 'Why, it's almost Jove-like! I could never look as imposing as that. Why doesn't he put some of the weaknesses of the man of clay into his clay man? it would be *me* then.' Of another bust: 'That is the head of a statesman — not mine. It looks like Roscoe Conkling. Curious — but people used to see a resemblance between us. Once in Utica I was addressed as "Mr. Conkling."' Of still another head by the same sculptor, however, he spoke in different terms: '*That* head looks like the man who can dream dreams — *he* might have written the books. It is the best thing that's ever been done of me, by far.'[1]

2. Here and There

In the autumn of 1915 the Prophet of Outdoordom (as Joel Benton named Mr. Burroughs) found himself honored in his own country and county, when the descendants of the More family, in a pageant depicting the vicissitudes of their pioneer ancestors in that region, introduced a Nature Interlude as Roxbury's tribute to him.

Shortly after the pageant, the citizens of Roxbury held a meeting at which they renamed some of the local Catskill peaks, among them, changing the name of Old Clump to the Burroughs Mountain. If the name were to be changed at all, Mr. Burroughs suggested that it be called Mount Eden, for his paternal grandfather who had settled at its foot; but his townsmen overruled him, pointing out that in calling it the Burroughs Mountain, his ancestors, as well as himself, were included. Though somewhat appeased, he declared, on his return from the meeting, 'It will never be anything but "Old Clump" to me.'

[1] This head is reproduced in *The Breath of Life.*

The Journal mentions but comparatively little work finished that season, but one essay, 'Fated to be Free' ('Under the Apple Trees'), was completed in August.

Echoes of various jaunts occur in the Journal, after return to the Nest:

October 21. Go to Riverside to visit Irving Bacheller. Fine hospitality. A large fine house and grounds well cared for. Feel much better than when I left home — depression and languor gone. Meet one hundred people at reception on Saturday. . . . Dr. Curtis of Columbia comes, and we go fishing in the harbor.

26. At Peconic. Fine weather. Feel the old charm of the place. William Winter an interesting and attractive man — very subdued and gentle, a good talker. Full of reminiscences of the old Saturday Press days of Henry Clapp. We live almost entirely in the past; but his theatre people not of much interest to me. We talk of everybody but Whitman.

Although so mild in this entry, on return home he upbraided himself for being so friendly with Winter after his persistently hostile attitude toward Whitman. 'But I found him old and feeble, and much subdued, and of course softened toward him.' Later, at the solicitation of friends, he wrote the letter to Winter which follows — under the circumstances, an excellent illustration of his obliging nature:

I have had one letter from you during my long life, but you have had none from me. So I am writing you a line to tell you how much I enjoyed those days with you at the Roulands. Like all good fruit, you have grown sweeter as you have grown riper, and I am sure that, unlike some fruit, you will always be sound at the heart.

I regret that we did not meet earlier in our lives. Much of your literary out-put is outside of the field of my interests, which is a narrow one, but I know your English books well, and have enjoyed them.

It was a delight to hear you recall the old 'Saturday Press' days, and the generation of writers to which we both belong. When men reach our age they begin to enjoy the leisure of the spirit, and the fret and fever of the world passes them by. I trust that a long, serene old age may be the fortune of both of us, and that we may meet again under as happy skies as we did before.

Still later he attended a benefit for William Winter, even consenting to being photographed with him. When, however, a few years later, the son of Winter, in a series of articles about his father, made unwarrantable claims of a friendship which

ON 'OLD CLUMP' IN THE CATSKILLS

never existed between Winter and Burroughs, making at the same time contemptible statements about Whitman, Mr. Burroughs's blood boiled. He not only retracted his recent softening toward Winter, but said he could never forgive the friend who 'tricked' him into meeting him, and in putting up a false show of intimacy with him. Above all, he blamed himself for not showing the disdain he really felt for Winter's 'many nasty attacks on Walt.' 'He was always contemptible toward Walt,' he said, 'and it was contemptible of me not to show him how I felt. I am weak that way — I despise myself for not having more backbone. I had seen Winter years before at the Holmes breakfast. He read a poem — sweetened water — no poetry. He clawed his hair, affected the grotesque; brought in some gruesome thing about a dead body — horrid! I was disgusted. I shall never forget the silly way he clawed his hair and tried to be unique, but only made a fool of himself.'

To Mr. Henry Ford he writes as follows, November 29th:

It was very good of you to think of me in connection with your peace trip. I wish I had the courage to go and could be of real service to you; but my health is rather precarious, and I know it is not wise for me to think of such a strenuous trip at this time of year. More than that, I cannot leave Mrs. Burroughs. She expects me to take her South next month.

I have such affection for you and admiration for your life and work that I hesitate to speak any discouraging word about any worthy scheme you may undertake. God knows we all want peace — a real enduring peace and not a mere truce. I would give all of my little pile to bring about such an end, but the day has not yet arrived when peace can be had. To stop the war now would be like stopping a surgical operation before it was finished. The malignant tumor of German militarism must be cut out and destroyed before the world can have permanent peace. The Allies will cut it out, give them another year.

When Germany will give up her hold on Belgium and France, and pay the damages, so far as money can pay them, and all sides will agree to a general disarmament, then peace will come and stay.

I am sure you would not want to see peace with the triumph of the Kaiser and his military lords. The Allies should fight to the last man before that day comes; and if it seriously threatens to come, I would have this country throw all her weight of men and money into the scale with the Allies. There are better things than peace. Security against future wars is better. If you could bring about a peace that would secure that, you would win the everlasting gratitude of mankind.

Here is a prayer from a man who never prays, that you may succeed.

I hope to run down to New York to see you before you are off.

Not a week passes but some one tries to reach you through me. So you must be indulgent with me. Now it is Robert Loveman of Dalton, Georgia, a poet, the author of the thin volume of verse called 'The Gates of Silence,' a copy of which I sent you a year ago. He wants to go with you on your peace mission. Just what service he could be to you I do not know. He is a good fellow and a true poet. . . . He is of Hungarian parentage. . . .

He writes in the Journal, December 4th:

See Mr. and Mrs. Ford from 10 am till 2 pm. Go to the steamer with them. Mr. Ford's heart is bigger than his head. A great crowd at the steamer. Ford is sanguine and happy. He might as well try to hasten spring as to hasten peace now. I told him as much.

His letters from the South later sometimes contained such reminders as, 'Don't forget to put out sweet apples for my rabbit,' — the one that lived under his Study, — or, 'Keep suet on the maple tree for the nuthatches.'

It was a forlorn time that he and Mrs. Burroughs spent in Washington in the early part of the new year, both becoming ill while visiting old friends, so that the Patten home was converted into a hospital. 'I told them it was risky business,' he wrote, 'taking in two such derelicts. They begin to realize it now. Those little devils that hold their orgies in my bowels trapped me again.' Simultaneously Mrs. Burroughs succumbed to an attack of influenza. A sorry time ensued. Unable to withstand the cold of the North, they reluctantly went on to Georgia, where, in the hospitable home of the De Loaches, they experienced more illness and wretchedness.

Both invalids reacted unfavorably upon each other. The daily bulletins from Georgia showed a serious state of affairs. Their kind hosts were at a loss to know what should be done. It was finally decided to bring Mr. Burroughs North, and keep Mrs. Burroughs South till spring. In a small sanitarium in New York, under the care of Dr. Ludwig Kast, Mr. Burroughs improved rapidly. As strength returned, he worked over the essays for his new volume, 'Under the Apple Trees.' Later, at Lakewood he had a happy convalescence.

[Journal] March 1. Have been at the Roofs since the 22d of February, gaining steadily in weight and strength. . . . Have had a good deal of pleasure in Maud Haviland's 'A Summer on the Yenesei.' A new world and vividly described. Miss Haviland is indeed a clever writer and a bird enthusiast. She has one fault — a woman's fault — she puts everything in — cannot select and abridge. Her fat volume cut down one-third would be greatly improved; but I owe her many pleasant hours.

Then I have read two War books, Lowes Dickinson's 'Appearances,' and dipped into many other books, and read 3 daily morning papers, and 2 evening papers.

Mrs. B. slowly gaining at Experiment.

March 7. Leave the Roofs today — an ideal home and ideal family. . . .

Mr. A. H. Pratt delivers me into the hands of the Princess Lwoff-Parlaghy, the Hungarian portrait painter. She fairly makes a prisoner of me — captures me, but only her art captivates me.

How much her art captivated him is seen in a letter to Mrs. Patten, his Washington hostess:

I have been two weeks in the house of an Hungarian princess — the Princess Lwoff-Parlaghy — who is a great portrait painter. She has painted my portrait and it is a great success — the only one of me that has ever been a success.

I shall never cease to feel grateful for the care and attention you gave to two distressed fellow-mortals. Such disinterested kindness touches one's heart. . . .

Reports of the success of the portrait were highly favorable. The artist had already painted Joseph Choate, Henry Fairfield Osborn, and Andrew Carnegie, on this side the Atlantic, besides many royal personages in Europe. Mr. Burroughs's son, on seeing the portrait, was enthusiastic, and he himself wrote, on March 11th:

It comes much nearer being the real me than any other portrait. I think she will finish it in two or three days. . . . No one else has got *me* as she has.[1]

[Journal] March 15. The Princess is as emotional and whimsical as a child — cried yesterday like a little girl because she thought I was hurrying her to finish the work. I calmed her — Markham and I — as we would a child, and then she made rapid progress.

Mrs. B. still in Georgia, and, I fear, is not making much progress toward recovery.

[1] This portrait is owned by Mr. Richard Vitolo.

Soon the news from Georgia became more cheering; proof of the new book began coming; in late March, at the Nest, he wrote in his Journal:

. . . How the old days when I helped boil sap in the home sugar-bush, and looked off over the fields through the lucid air, come back to me! I was happy then. I am happy now — except when thoughts of my poor suffering wife cross my mind.

Ice broke up about noon. A broad open lane of water stretching across the river appeared about noon, and the whole body of ice began to move down.

April 3. My seventy-ninth birthday. A mild, lovely day. C. B. has Julian's family to dinner. We have maple sugar picnic in afternoon . . . eat lock-jaw from the snow in the sap-pan. One snow-bank near the well affords us clean snow — a good time. Good news from Mrs. B.

The next day, in New York, at a reception at the Princess Parlaghy's, his portrait was seen by more than a hundred friends. Hopes had been raised high. A few of us formed a disappointed minority. On subsequent days, other friends came, as the Journal relates:

Roosevelt and [Robert] Bacon came to see the portrait. The Colonel is fully satisfied with it. He is fairly bursting with energy and good cheer. Talks his way through other people's talk like a snow-plow going through a snow-bank. A miracle of vitality and power, both in body and mind.

That day, as Roosevelt was leaving, having made his adieus to the Princess and Oom John, he started down the stairs from the reception hall, followed by the courtly, silent Mr. Bacon and one or two others who had accompanied him thither. He halted abruptly on the steps, his eye arrested by the portrait of Andrew Carnegie which hung above the stairway. Shaking his fist close to the painted face, he exclaimed through his teeth, 'You look just like what you are — you damned old pacifist!' And down the stairs he bolted — the solemn, foreign-looking liveried flunkeys standing aghast at the explosion.

The perturbed Princess almost screamed her query, 'Wh-what was that he said?' And when some one repeated the remark without any elision, the Princess, though speaking no word, said much in her quickened breath and dilating nostrils.

If, as we were beginning to suspect, there was a pro-German atmosphere in that house, that ringing shot of the Colonel's was an eloquent challenge.

In mid-April, Mrs. Burroughs arrived from Georgia, looking much stronger than we had expected she could; thereafter, although having many ups and downs, for a time she gained in both flesh and strength.

[Journal] April 14. Battle of Verdun still raging. I believe the hellish Germans will finally take it.

19. Looks as if we might break with Germany on the sub-marine issue. Hope we will, and that War will follow. It might be our good luck to share in the honor and glory of helping the Allies crush this pirate of the seas and desperado of the land.

Two eggs in the robin's nest in my summer-house.

It is good to recall that those dreadful days of the War were brightened for him by the beneficence of Nature, as is seen in the next entry:

April 20. An ideal April day, still, slightly veiled, moist, mild. I walk over through the Gordon fields, up the little brook past the gravel-pit, loitering here and there, observing the hermit thrush only twenty feet away — he eyed me and I eyed him. Then I sit a long time in the dim sunshine behind the stone wall and enjoy the sweet solitude of shut-in fields. I hear my first chewink, see my first ruby-crowned kinglet, and fairly bask in the spirit of April. I see her glance in the full, clear, happy streams, in the greening patches in the meadows, and hear her voice in the calls and songs of the mating birds. . . . Saw a robin with a touch of albinism — white quills in its tail, and many white feathers on its rump. As it flew it suggested a rose-breasted grosbeak. An hour's walk, hand in hand with April.

That season he found twelve robins' nests at Riverby. Those on the veranda at the Nest, and one in the rosebush at the rear door, and another in his summer-house (because the birds were so intolerant of his goings and comings), gave him much concern. For days he stayed out of the summer-house rather than disturb the robin during incubation.

One of the most welcome of the May visitors at the Nest that spring was Joyce Kilmer, who endeared himself to all by his kindly ways, modest manner, and entertaining talk. His interview with Mr. Burroughs followed in the New York Times, May 21st, accompanied by a reproduction of the recently painted Parlaghy portrait.

That season in his old haunts around his river home Mr. Burroughs gathered the material for the essay 'The Familiar Birds' ('Field and Study'). One day as he was showing an enthusiastic couple from the West an oven-bird's nest, — an open secret near the path, on the way to Slabsides, which they had passed unheeding, — the young woman exclaimed enthusiastically, 'Mr. Burroughs, what *do* you use to make your eyes so bright?'

'Oh, just ordinary stove-polish,' he replied carelessly.

In late June, Mr. Paul Roche came to Riverby and in an hour or two made a sketch of Mr. Burroughs for an etching, admirable in its rugged sturdiness.

In June Mr. Burroughs gave two young women friends the freedom of Slabsides for a fortnight; and when a strange young man came to Riverby seeking work, Mr. Burroughs, divining that the youth had more wit and enthusiasm than dollars, gave him his Bark Study to sleep in during the summer months, and helped him get work in the neighborhood — thus quickly did he judge of a person, and do him a good turn in the simplest off-hand way.

[Journal] June 9. I lay the corner-stone of the bird-fountain at Fair Lane [the Ford home at Dearborn, Michigan], in which I have cut my name — the fountain and the walks to it, and the terrace above, all made of stone from near Woodchuck Lodge — stone that I helped my brothers pick up for a wall in my youth. [Mr. Ford had sent to the Burroughs Homestead Farm for a carload of the stone for this purpose. A year or two later, the standing statuette made by Pietro at Roxbury in 1915 was placed above the Bird Fountain at Fair Lane.]

To the aged father of a correspondent Mr. Burroughs sent this birthday letter, dated July 10th:

Dear Mr. Hunt,

Why should not one old farmer send a word of greeting to an older farmer, tho' a stranger to him, upon his birthday, and wish him joy in the days that remain to him? All farmers are akin, they were reared in the same great lap of Mother Nature and are brothers in the love of the soil. I have always been a farmer at heart, and much of the time in reality.

Here on the Hudson I have a twenty acre fruit-farm and cultivate grapes and literature. I do less of the former than I used to, but still try to keep the vines pruned and thrifty in my intellectual vineyard.

I hear through your daughter, Mrs. Goodrich, that you still do a man's work in the field. I envy you. I plant and hoe the garden, pump water in the kitchen, saw and split a little wood, drive my Ford car, etc., but a half hour in the hay-mow the other day pitching back hay, convinced me that I do not want a job in haying.

I was born in Roxbury, Delaware Co., on a dairy farm. I own the old homestead of 350 [1] acres and usually spend my summers there. We are planning to go there this week.

I trust you will easily reach your 90th birthday, and if I am around I will drop you a line then.

In mid-July, Mr. and Mrs. Burroughs, with a niece to help them, went to Roxbury for the summer, where, for a time, the invalid showed some improvement. Writing to me from there concerning a course of lectures on psychiatry on which I was engaged, Mr. Burroughs said: 'I hope your job is nearly finished. Mine is endless — *my* theme is the universe. . . .'

I enclose an editorial from the Tribune which I enjoyed, also a review of G. Stanley Lee's book by Randolph Bourne in the New Republic. It is excellent and paints Lee truly. I could not have done a thing like that. I cannot read Lee seriously because he does not seem to write seriously; his shop is all show-window where his verbal monkeys do their tiresome tricks.

He writes to Mrs. J. M. Patten:

. . . I have often been invited to Green Acres, but I am sure I could not stand that crowd of cold-potato philosophers, as Carlyle called Alcott.

. . . My memory has more holes in it and bigger ones than those in my old coat pocket; and the worst of it is, I can't mend them, as I can the latter.

It is fine and sweet here — a country of cattle and grass — every breeze brings you the breath of the meadows and of the hill pastures. I am writing this in my orchard-camp under the apple trees, with my rifle standing at my elbow. The woodchucks are doing their best to make the place justify its name. I kill about three a day. If we could only eat them as they eat our garden-truck, we would not need to call at the butcher's, or visit our neighbor's hen-roosts.

He writes of Mr. Roche's picture of him:

It has strength — is not the typical old man. I enclose another snap-shot I like. This attitude shows me to good advantage, I think. The man looks alive, and as if he might strike back — not a 'damned pacifist.'

[1] On re-survey, the farm is found to contain about 320 acres.

[Journal] August 2. For two years now the one keen expectation of each day, the one event to look forward to with eagerness and pleasure, has been the arrival of the morning paper. What good news from Armageddon will it bring today? Have the Huns yet been checked or hurled back? Have the Allies yet profitted by the lessons in the art of war which the Huns have given them? My first thought in the morning is of the probable day's news, and my main thought when I awaken in the middle of the night is of the unholy war — unholy for the Huns, holy for the Allies.

When the paper comes I want to run away to some secluded spot and read it undisturbed, as I would a love letter. First I skim the headings hurriedly to get the import of the big print; then read the details of the more important events; then the less important — impatient of all spread-out accounts of our own local and home news. Only the news from the War is of vital and world-wide and age-wide importance. The stake of the world, and of civilization is in the European conflict. If the Huns triumph, woe be unto us! A robber nation will again overrule the world. After dinner I go over the news again, and glean where I reaped before. Or I get hold of another daily and read its version; the change in type and heading freshens the news up. By lamp-light I often glance over the news again.

In magazines and the weekly periodicals I look only for War news or War discussions. When I was ill last winter, I kept saying to myself, 'I must live to see the end of this War, and see Germany adequately punished.' I did not say, 'If she is to triumph, let me die now,' but such a possibility made life far less desirable.

A glimpse of the jaunt with Mr. Edison is given in the Journal:

August 29 came Edison and his party to take me with them on a motor-trip. They camped in my orchard, an unwonted sight — a camper's extemporized village under my old apple trees — 4 tents, a large dining-tent, and at night electric lights. And the man, Edison, the center around which it all revolved.

That evening as we sat around the dining-table in the orchard, under the pale-green canopy, lighted by electric lights, eating the elaborate dinner which the English *chef* had prepared, the modern Merlin sat at the head of the table dining off toast and hot milk, saying of his frugal fare, 'This suits me best, — but I could live for days just on the news of Rumania joining the Allies.' The talk between Mr. Edison and Mr. Burroughs around the camp-fire, and the sight of their white heads in the firelight, there under the old apple trees, were things to remember. Their chatting took a wide range — dietetics,

recent discoveries in chemistry and physics, the latest developments of the War, boyhood reminiscences, and primitive man — the last suggested by a recognition of what awakens in every one at sight of a fire in the open. The night was very cold, but Mr. Edison would not yield to the temptation even to bring their cots on the veranda, declaring they must not begin by coddling themselves like that. Such a beatific look as Mr. Edison's face wore during their encampment there! Laboratories and other work for that busy brain ceased to exist. He simply basked in 'Nature's primal sanities.'

A few days before their arrival Mr. Burroughs had chiseled on a roadside rock:

'The Ford Lot 1914 J. B.,' with the figure of a hand indicating the lot below and across the road, which had been converted into a meadow two years before. When he asked Mr. Edison if he thought the chiseling would last fifty years, the latter replied that he thought it ought to last five hundred years. On the next visit of Mr. Ford, he told Mr. Burroughs he was prouder to have that meadow named for him, and of that inscription carved by him, than of any monument they could give him.

Back at the Lodge after the gypsying, Mr. Burroughs was soon catching woodchucks and making observations on the chipmunk. 'Be sure to save the cherry-pits for my chipmunk,' he would say whenever canned cherries were served at the Lodge, and, lest we forget, was always on hand to collect the pits. The rats made sad havoc that season with his golden bantam corn, but when he found little Stripe-Coat in a trap he had set for the rat, he was indeed unhappy.

'See what I have done!' he said in deep contrition, as he came in the house with the little creature dead in his palm. Later in the morning, Eliza found little Wilson, his grandnephew, behind a door, weeping. 'Uncle John caught the chipmunk in a rat-trap,' he sobbed; and all that day Uncle John looked as if he would like to go behind the door and weep, too. Thereafter he let the rats strip the corn in peace.

The sufferings of Mrs. Burroughs wore on him seriously. She could not bear to have him out of her sight; and, as is common with neurotic invalids, she more or less unconsciously emphasized her suffering when he came near, the expression of pain and concern on his face, which her groaning elicited,

seeming to give her a sort of comfort. During his brief absences she was much less complaining, at times even cheerful.

[Journal] Oct 2. Mrs. B. weeping like a child this morning with pain, but when I tell her I shall have to go away if she keeps that up, she gradually stops. No words can tell how I pity her. She is so unheroic and so querulous.

6. All sun and sky again. The old sugar-bush is beginning to boil and foam with color.

Great Britain is of course arrogant. Arrogance is a part of the British constitution. Her conduct upon the sea has always been high-handed. Natural enough: she is an island empire and her existence as such depends upon her supremacy upon the sea. Let her have it. Why should the elephant be jealous of the whale? Let the continental empires go their way. Germany wants both the sea and the land, to the exclusion of England.

One October morning I noticed Mr. Burroughs walking along by a stone wall, turning over the top stones, and peering intently beneath them, occasionally detaching something from their under surfaces and putting it in a small box he carried. To the query, 'Pray, what are you looking for?' he answered:

'Oh, only trying to get a peep into "Nature's infinite book of secrecy," here under the stones. She is hiding many interesting things here, and I like to spy them out. There's only insect life here now, and it is preparing to go into its winter trance. They are the frailest of living creatures, yet Nature will carry them over the winter here beneath these hard, cold stones, stark and stiff, like mummies — the fires of life not extinguished but dormant — the machinery of life stopped, but not destroyed. The warmth of the spring will set it going again.' It was probably the same day that he made the journal entry which follows:

Oct. 8. To know how abundant certain forms of life are at this time, turn over the stones by the roadside, or in the fields, or lift up those on the top of the wall. Spiders and spiders and spiders in their silk cocoons, bands of black crickets that scamper away, caterpillars in their cocoons, masses of pink spider eggs in their silken receptacles, wasps clinging to a small bit of comb. I could get silk enough from these spider cocoons to twist a rope to hang me with. One spider under my pocket-glass has a head like a woodchuck, except for its

blunt nose, with many eyes that look like jewels. But the shape, color, and eyes on the top of the head are strangely like those of a woodchuck. Its back is gray, with an iridescent streak down its middle. It is the spider whose legs seem so closely bunched together, — about ⅛ inch long.

In an essay, 'Nature Lore' ('Field and Study'), he elaborated this. Such descriptions of insect life as he did write indicate that had he oftener turned his attention to the insect world, we might have had in America an 'insect's Homer,' even as France had hers in Henri Fabre. One can but regret that he did not at least write the chapter he contemplated, — 'Life under a Stone.' After reading Fabre's book on the caterpillars he was enthusiastic over his ingenious and tireless observation, his fertility, and his sprightly way of writing. Such insight, such patience, such imagination, he said, made him ashamed of his own desultory observations.

Of Fabre's chapter on 'Smells,' he said there was one point in which he had to disagree with him, but, as a whole, his theory was incontrovertible.

[Journal] October 10. Lady Russell, author of 'Elizabeth and her German Garden,' with her daughter, called. The Whiteheads brought them.

Lady R. is a beautiful woman, small in stature, with very regular features, with the fresh, youthful English complexion. I divined something about her that was unusual before she got out of the car, and before I heard her name. It was her manner. She has manner, not put-on manners, — something bred in the blood, a low, gentle, easy tone and bearing. It was a rare treat. Manners are an old world, aristocratic product. They do not flourish in a democracy like ours. I myself have none. I am natural, unaffected, but my naturalness has never been touched with this something extra — this perfume of manners. The same is true of her daughter — tall, darker, and very beautiful.

We sat before the open fire and Lady Russell ate one of my strawberry apples, and told me of reading my books in Berlin. She is a woman of genius. Her books are charming — nature, art, and society happily mingled.

A red-letter day, indeed — their drinking tea with us around the Franklin stove that cold autumn day, 'Elizabeth' as delightfully chummy and whimsical as in her earlier books, and the 'May Baby,' now the charming Miss von Arnim.

How perversely memory holds to trivial things! I recall the

mingled amusement and chagrin we felt when, at the breaking up of the jolly circle around the fire, while the visitors still lingered on the veranda, the ever-present housewifely instinct of Mrs. Burroughs asserted itself, and she called out in no uncertain tones, 'Eliza, bring the brush and dust-pan — some of them brought in a chunk of mud.'

How critical Mr. Burroughs could be, even of his friends, is seen in this journal entry:

Roosevelt loads his gun too heavy. The recoil hurts him more than the shot does his enemy. He is bound to make a big noise, but the kick of the gun is so much power taken from the force of the bullet. People react vigorously against him, as they always do to surplus verbal energy. It is poor politics to say the least. He has made me take Wilson's side. His is a case where the half is more than the whole. I do not believe that the people of this country can be bullied and brow-beaten into supporting any man. I believe they will resent the course of an ex-president who, on all occasions, pours out upon the President a flood of what savors of vindictive personal abuse.

Roosevelt would be a really great man if he could be shorn of that lock of his hair in which that strong dash of the bully resides. He looks up to Lincoln, why can he not copy a little of his humility and modesty? His fierce attacks upon the President are humiliating to the whole country. . . .

I venture the prediction that R. will never again be president. . . . The desire to be has poisoned his blood.

He puts a good deal of himself in the letter dated November 7th to Judge Talbot:

Your letter came last night and set my spirits streaming your way. I wish my body could follow soon, but it is doubtful if it can.

We took my wife away to the [Battle Creek] Sanitarium at Middletown on Saturday, and I am to go over in a day or two and see how she is getting on. She is very feeble and the diagnosis [prognosis] is almost hopeless — a cancerous condition of the bowels is feared. Dr. Barrus took her over there and returned to N.Y. where she is delivering her course of lectures on psychiatry. She will be engaged there till December.

I am much disturbed about my wife. We have lived together over fifty-nine years, and she is like a part of my own body. I do not know what I will do without her; and then the suffering that is before her depresses me to think of. I am here alone, and not in the mood for going about. . . . If my wife does not improve at the Sanitarium, we shall bring her home (to the Doctor's) and do all we can to make her comfortable, and I must stick by her in these hours of feebleness and pain.

I expect Hughes will be elected today, but not by my vote. I can never again vote for a protective tariff, and I will not vote for a man whom the Kaiser element in this country wants. Hughes is a fine fellow, but he can never be a great leader. He is too fine — he is sandstone and not granite. His face is not strong. Put it alongside of Wilson's, and see the difference. Neither man suits me, but I must make my choice. I wanted Roosevelt, and would like to see the Republican bosses rebuked for turning him down; but I cannot forgive him his abuse of Wilson. . . .

A newspaper syndicate has just written me that they were about to send a man up here to get from me a Thanksgiving sermon on what this country should be thankful for. I wrote them not to come — I had no such sermon to preach; that I should be more thankful, and prouder of my country if we had two or three million men in Europe shooting Germans and Turks. . . .

[Journal] November 7. Ideal Election Day. In pm I walk up to Esopus to vote for Wilson, but do not expect he will be elected. This may be my last Presidential vote, and I vote on principles — only a revenue tariff, and for the man the pro-Germans *don't* want. Wilson is a much stronger man than Hughes. Put their pictures side by side and see the difference — good humor and fine sensibility in one, and strength of will and of character in the other. But the masses never want the best.

9. The magazine writer has a new problem — how to address himself to the moving-picture brain — the brain that does not want to read or think, but only to use its eager shallow eyes — eyes that prefer the shadows and ghosts of things to the things themselves; that rather see the ghosts of people flitting around on the stage than to see the real flesh and blood. How an audible dialogue would tire them — it might compel them to use their minds a little — horrible thought!

For my own part, I am sure I cannot interest this moving-picture brain, and do not want to. It is the shallowest brain that has yet appeared in the world. What is to be the upshot of this craze over this mere wash of reality which the Movies (horrible word!) offer our young people?

Go to Middletown at 12.30. Find Mrs. B. very tired and discontented. The diagnosis from the revelation of the X-rays — a cancerous state of the colon. I had long ago made up my mind that she could not get well, but when they told me what they saw, and that she could probably not live more than a month or six weeks, it came like a fresh blow. It cut me through and through. I return on 4.20 train.

10. Little sleep in the cold lonely house on a cot at the foot of her bed. What can I do? No one will miss her or mourn for her but me. How pitiful, oh, how pitiful! We have lived here 43 years.

12. [At Middletown.] . . . I fear she grows weaker. . . . I sit by her and do all I can for her. Oh, how emaciated she is! Wants to talk with the Doctor about her case. I tell her a part of what they say — that it is serious, and the chances are against her; but I tell her to will to get well. She says she will do all she can.

On learning of the grave prognosis concerning his wife, Mr. Burroughs wrote pathetically:

She wants to get away from there — home, or to the hospital in Poughkeepsie. I seem to want her in her own house during her last days. What do you advise? I am fearfully forlorn here now — both houses dead. I may go back Saturday to be near her. I know I shall regret it if I do not. It was so pitiful to leave her lying there alone. . . . I am more depressed than I thought I could be. Oh, it is so pitiful! . . . So little she has got out of life, when there was so much! But I must compose myself. The inevitable must be faced. . . . Could Addie come up here and take care of her for a few weeks — until your lectures are done? . . .

Shortly after this, the American Institute of Arts and Letters conferred upon him a gold medal for excellence in *belles-lettres*. He briefly records in the Journal, 'A great surprise, but, near eighty, it means little to me.' On the day of the meeting he said, 'How can I go there for that medal — such a mockery — with poor 'Sulie lying there slowly dying!' To a friend at Vassar he wrote: 'The gold medal should have given me more pleasure than it did. At my age what does one care for such honors? If I were a chicken like you, it would have made my feathers shine.' He added:

I have written some new nature essays, and am wondering if the old pollard will never cease to sprout. I am reading Emerson's Journals with pleasure. They are a refuge from the terrible newspapers. One finds a spiritual solitude in Emerson that is healing — a lone star that shines with a pure, steady ray. . . .

[Journal] Dec. 3. Must rest from my writing. Have written nine essays since May, three on birds, one for the Youths Companion, one for the Art World, called 'The Good Devils,' two on Nature Lore, and one called 'The Natural Providence,' and one, 'The Price of Development,' or 'Biology and War,' or 'Development and War,' — which?

Shortly after he wrote a paper, 'The High Cost of Dying,' for the New York Tribune.

A picture of his anxious days goes in late December to Miss Gertrude Ballard:

My poor wife does not mend. We brought her here [The Nest] from the [Poughkeepsie] hospital over two weeks ago, as the doctors there said they could do nothing for her. She suffers a great deal and is a great care. I have no plans for the winter but to stay here and do all I can for her. I do some writing, some reading, some wood-splitting, some walking, and a good deal of musing before my open wood fire. Strangers drop in now and then, and through the mails make many demands upon me. I feed the birds in front of my window, and play Santa Claus to a chipmunk near by who is evidently short of winter stores. . . .

To Mr. Julius E. Olson, University of Wisconsin, he wrote as follows:

I wish I could be with you on December 6 when the University of Wisconsin proposes to do honor to the memory of one of its old pupils, John Muir, but the very serious illness of my wife, and my own uncertain health, will not permit me to enjoy that privilege.

My affection and admiration for Muir were deep and genuine. When in his company I used to chafe a good deal under his biting Scotch wit and love of contradiction. He loved a verbal contest, which was, with him, only another form of the trial of grit which in his school days he used to cheerfully submit to when the boys, armed with whips, used to stand up before each other and lay on till one of them cried enough. As I never had that kind of Scotch discipline, I did not keenly enjoy this sort of diversion. But his heart was all right, only he liked too well to mask its real kindliness in this way.

He was a genuine student and lover of nature, and he brought to us the message of the mountains as no other man has.

In recently reading Emerson's Journals I was struck and pleased with the fact that he places John Muir in the list of what he called 'My men.' In this list the first is Thomas Carlyle, whom he first met in 1833, and the last is John Muir, whom he met in 1871. Muir's nature lore, and his striking characteristics were bound to make an impression upon Emerson. He met no 'mush of concession' when he met Muir. . . . I am glad your University is to pay this tribute to its famous and beloved old student.

One December evening, at the Nest, when some one at the supper-table mentioned a recent reference to Lincoln by Lloyd George, Mr. Burroughs said, 'I wish there was some one with Carlyle's ability to portray Lincoln.'

'Why don't you write about Lincoln? You never have.'

'I am not big enough,' he replied; and continued: 'I often think of De Quincey's remark about the Romans — he said

they were great in the presence of man, but not great in the presence of Nature. If I have any greatness at all, it is in the presence of Nature; it is never in the presence of man. My interest is primarily in wild nature, in the universe as a whole, but not in man and his doings. I couldn't deal with men; as I have so often said, my intellectual nature is stronger than my moral nature.'

At the passing of Mr. Trowbridge, he wrote Mrs. Trowbridge: 'He was about my oldest and best-beloved friend. Next to Walt Whitman, he had the deepest hold upon my affections of any American man of letters. I shall miss him all the rest of my days.'

3. The Valley of the Shadow

The New Year dawned with overcast skies; the river was like a mirror with its great fields of floating ice; the long moonlight nights were unspeakably beautiful; and the busy life at the Nest, by night and by day, revolved around the waning life of the invalid whose eighty-first birthday came on the third day of the year. On that day she said to her husband that she hoped she would live as long as he did, and he as long as she, but no longer; and by the next morning he began to think her wish was coming true, or that he might even go first. Before dawn he came downstairs, pale and frightened, after having tried long in vain to replace a hernia which usually easily yielded to his manipulations. A bad quarter of an hour supervened before reduction was accomplished. He confessed later that he had thought ominously of his wife's remark, and, for a little, had feared that he was going, as did Hiram, from a similar condition.

The deaths of his friends came with depressing frequency. Of Mr. Hamilton W. Mabie he wrote:

> I shall miss him from the world. . . . He was a lovable and helpful man; not one of the original men, but a very serviceable man. . . . His friends will not forget him. He did not touch nature directly, but through books; he sustained first-hand relations with few things, which is true of most of us. He shone in his editorials in the Outlook; and how he did shine as Toast Master at a dinner! Never saw his equal. And now the eternal darkness and stillness surrounds him!

Mrs. Burroughs steadily declined. By mid-January symptoms of failing compensation in the heart became more appar-

ent, with increasing helplessness. Mr. Burroughs shared the care of her, until the broken sleep and anxiety told on him so markedly that he was forced to yield this point, and try sleeping in his Study, where he could not hear her through the night.

Meanwhile, the hideous War filled the horizon. On January 23 he came from the post office, his eyes shining with joy, and read aloud the President's speech to the Senate. 'Masterly, epoch-making!' he exclaimed. 'Its fine style, its big grasp, its lofty ideals! We can lift our heads now.' He wrote of it in the Journal:

> In its elevation of thought, and the source from which it emanated, it is like a message written upon the sky which all the world can read, and which all the world will, in time, read and heed. Words so full of meaning and prophecy fulfill themselves; they work on men's imaginations.

Those early days in February, when Germany announced her ruthless U-boat measures, and when our people were rejoicing that Count Bernstorff had been given his *congé*, were commingled for the dwellers at Riverby with near-by deepening shadows. In all his anxieties, personal and international, Mr. Burroughs did not forget to put out seed and suet for the winter birds. He was especially fond of a red-breasted (Canadian) nuthatch that came often to the honeysuckle vines on the veranda, and stayed o' nights in a wren-box in the vineyard. If his little pensioner failed to appear, he would go and knock on the post to see if he were in. We often heard him talking confidingly to the bird as it lingered in the vines.

The Italian sculptor Mr. C. S. Paolo spent a few days at the Nest at that period, making a profile bas-relief of Mr. Burroughs, a contemplative pose of noble dignity.

By mid-February it became increasingly apparent to his son and others, including Dr. John Freston, our friend and medical counsellor, that some change must be arranged, lest Mr. Burroughs break under the long strain of nursing and anxiety. Providentially, at this juncture, came an invitation to join Mr. Henry Ford for a short cruise in Southern waters. Mrs. Burroughs, then apathetic much of the time, would scarcely miss him; and for him to stand by and watch the slow decline was agony. It was a grave question to decide, but the

longer life and increased usefulness which a short respite promised for him, caused friends and physicians to urge his going.

He writes in his Journal:

Leave at noon with Mr. Ford on his private car for the Southern cruise. . . .

. . . She barely realizes that I am off, yet she asked me how long I would be gone. I stood by her bedside some moments, gazing upon her emaciated face, yellow with jaundice, and wondered if I would ever see it again, not believing that I would.

I rested my face on hers a moment and said Good bye. 'Good bye, dear,' she said, and we parted, probably for the last time — over sixty years had I known her, and been her husband 59½ years.

I can no longer feel the acute grief that I felt a few months ago. Nature will not keep up that strain. She is almost the same as dead to me now. Every hour she is in my mind, and I would weep if I could. How pitiful it all is! Oh, if she could only be spared the suffering — if she could only go to sleep and not wake up!

With the patient, disorientation and apathy increased. Each day the tide of life ebbed.

On February 21st the travelers embarked on the *Sialia* (Bluebird) at Charlestown, South Carolina.

[Journal] Feb. 22. All day on a blue, placid sea, calm as the Hudson, though one feels the slow pulse of the sea under all. . . . A troop of gulls hover over our wake and stern all day. What grace, what ease, what mastery of flight! Oh, if we could do things in words with the same grace that gulls fly! — that were literature!

23. . . . In the middle of the steel-blue shield all day, sailing, sailing, and never getting off the magic shield. It journeys with us.

25. . . . At the Firestones' place at Lemon (Why is 'Lemon' less dignified as the name of a Post Office than 'Orange'?) Large picturesque house and garage of coral rock . . . on the marge of the bay. . . . The grass is like May. I smell it, and feel like eating it. . . . Six boys and one girl — a beautiful family, a happy home.

He writes home on February 28th, not having received letters telling of the invalid's rapid decline, only the earlier and cheerier telegrams having reached him:

I hope you and your patient had a quiet night. . . . It is good for me to be away, I know, but my thoughts are back there. . . . All are very kind to me. . . .

And from Havana, March 1st:

Our boat is anchored near where the *Maine* was sunk. Our wireless keeps us posted on the news. Every night, over our heads, here in the dark air, darts and shoots all the important news, no one the wiser except as it is revealed by this instrument. A net-work of pulsing lines overhead . . . which our senses are too dull to apprehend — all about us these vibrations come and go, cross and recross, and we know it not! Such things reveal how much more fine and marvellous Nature is than we have dreamed. . . . It is such mystery and magic as the ages of superstition and ignorance never dreamed of. The news is typed on a sheet of paper and given to Mr. Ford. This is the news you get the next morning. . . .

Meanwhile, although the patient was rapidly failing, by neither letter nor telegram could we communicate with the *Sialia* until it reached Havana, when it would be too late to recall the voyager. The one comforting thought during those last harrowing days, was that he was being spared what must have proved almost insupportable to him. 'If I had any misgivings before,' said his son, 'I can't be thankful enough now that we sent Father away.'

The end came at seven in the morning, March 6th. The Journal of March 7th tells where the tidings reached him:

In the afternoon, at three, as I sit alone on the upper deck reading an editorial in the N.Y. Evening Post on Mr. Howells' eightieth birthday, a telegram comes from C. B. saying my wife died peacefully yesterday — a blow I have been daily looking for, and which I thought I was prepared for. Here in this peaceful harbor, on this ealm summer day, with the big ships coming and going about me, came this sad news. A long chapter in my life, nearly sixty years, ended.

I am too much crushed to write about it now.

The next day, he wrote in part as follows:

Poor Soul! I am glad she is at rest. Her life was more than a burden to her the last year, and a great trial to us all. I am oppressed with long, long thoughts, as you well know. I am such a victim of the years! I see the long procession of them during which we lived together file by me. I think of all her good traits, of all the many ways in which she served me so faithfully; and I forget her faults. I see only her virtues. She did the best she could. She did not share my life because she was not thus made. The pity of it all is that she did not realize her own shortcomings. But which of us do? I know well what a trial I must be to live with, tho' kind and tender hands can mould me as they will.

Her death closes a long chapter in my life, and 'Finis' cannot be

far off. I do not know how I am going to adjust myself to the changed conditions; but Time attends to such things. I have had a year or more to look the problem in the face and I ought not to be dismayed now. You are there to comfort and sustain me, and I believe all will be well.

I did not get a single letter (though some telegrams) till the news of the death came — we couldn't plan ahead where we would get mail. . . . I dread to come suddenly into the cold. I dread the house of death. I am a weak creature and I could do nothing but bemoan myself if I were with you at the funeral. I hope Julian will be brave and fill my place. . . .

[Journal] March 8. Write to C. B. and Julian. Telegraph to C. B.: 'Shall I come?'

The Ford party all off fifty miles into the country to visit the Rosario plantation of Señor Pelayo. I have no heart to go with them, but crave a little solitude on the nearby hills. The launch puts me ashore on the N.E. side, and I walk up on the ridge overlooking the sea. Even Nature in her harsher aspects in the tropics soothes and heals. I stand and loiter long on the breezy ridge and look North upon the great blue crescent of the sea.

I have but one thought, and am glad to be alone with it on the hills.

9. A better sleep, but how I am living in the past! How I go over and over my last days with her. One cannot foretell the pain that the death of near and dear ones is bound to bring. When the fear becomes the reality, how naked we stand! I had anticipated these days over and over, and felt secure. Forewarned, I was, but I could not be forearmed. In my old age this bereavement falls upon me, and I am less able to meet it than I would have been years ago. Then life had more future, now it is so nearly all in the past tense. Without C. B., and Julian and his children, what would I do!

10. . . . As I walk the deck I look off yearningly toward the green and brown hills where I walked with my sorrow on the 8th. I left something of myself on those hills. I lived in that solitude one hour of intensified life. No other point in the horizon so attracts me now. Thoughts of my poor lost one consecrate those hills. Oh, if she could only know how my heart went out to her that day!

He writes home on March 14th:

You can imagine with what interest and emotion I read yours and Julian's letters. I went apart by myself and lived through those days with you with such self-control as I could summon. . . . I rejoice that I was not there; and that you and Julian did not want me; and that she did not miss me. I was never the same man physically after

witnessing Mother's death, and I did not want another such ordeal. I am glad the burial has been deferred till April. . . .

Send the Ms. ['The Price of Development'] to Johnson and tell him I am in no mood or condition to come down. Write the Roulands that it is very doubtful about my coming to N.Y. for my birthday; that I had rather be let alone on that day. At my 180th birthday I may feel like it, or even at my 90th. The older I get, the more I crave to be let alone on my birthdays. If anyone has a claim on me at this time, it is you and Julian. . . .

On return, he wanted every detail of the days since he had left. After sitting long upstairs in the 'river room,' where he had parted with his wife, he asked to hear the hymns which had been played at the services. On succeeding days he forced himself to read the letters and telegrams awaiting him, until he read one in which a correspondent assured him it would not be long before the pearly gates would swing open and let him through, too.

'You needn't answer that — unless you tell her I have no desire to pass through the pearly gates just yet,' he said.

Happily, the momentous world events claimed his attention — the Revolution in Russia, the news of three more American ships sunk. Was this, he asked sarcastically, a sufficiently 'overt act'?

It was good to hear him say contentedly, a few mornings after his return, as he sat down to breakfast, 'This is a better harbor than Havana harbor.' It showed he was adjusting himself healthily to the changed conditions. In the closing days of March he wrote in his Journal: 'A new-born river! When the ice moved out, it carried much of my gloom and depression with it.'

To Miss Gertrude Ballard:

I have come back into this shadow, but I know that Death was a blessed release to her, and that thought helps to salve my wounds. We had lived together nearly sixty years, and, notwithstanding the disharmonies, her death leaves a great void in my life. . . . I am here with Dr. Barrus and her nephew, and am well taken care of. . . .

On the morning of his birthday he came in from the post office all aglow with the joy of President Wilson's message, which he had glanced at on the way over, and which he read aloud exultantly, after breakfast, often having to stop for emotion. 'It is the greatest utterance from the White House in

my time — or in any time,' he declared. He wrote of it in the Journal on his 80th birthday: 'President Wilson's message my best gift to-day — a great message to the whole world. I read it with profound emotion. I believe it will play a great part in the future political history of mankind.' The message gave him renewed vigor. He tackled the deluge of correspondence awaiting him; he went to Kingston and made changes in his will; he read with relief the declaration of War by the Senate; and followed with feverish interest the new drive begun by the British at Arras. His further efforts at readjustment, and his attitude toward the world questions, may be gathered from letters to intimate friends. To the Honorable E. Platt, on April 7th:

Thank you for your letter of April third. It found me stepping lightly and cheerily into the ranks of the octogenarians, and facing undismayed the portentous years of the coming decade. I believe I am in better health than a year ago, and I hope there is quite as much work in me as there was then. My literary output during my eightieth year was greater than in any other year of my life. What I have written since my seventy-ninth birthday will fill a volume — about half of it is about bird and other nature subjects, the other half, literary and philosophical. The best gift of my birthday was President Wilson's war message to Congress. I read it and re-read it with profound emotion. . . . Wilson is at last equal to the occasion and measures up to the standard which the people have so long demanded. His slowness and hesitation during the past two years will make his great utterance all the more welcome and convincing now. It is like a message written upon the skies which all the world can see, and take note of. It is quite certain, I think, that the Russians took note of, and were profoundly influenced by his earlier address to the Senate; and I believe the Germans themselves will be greatly influenced toward democracy by this message. In fact, I believe it will play a very important part in the future political history of mankind.

On April 8th:

Dear Frank Talbot:

You crowned me with the finest bit of verse I received on my birthday, though you had several other competitors. . . . It is felicitous, as well as true, and makes my eighty years sit lightly upon me. . . . I am glad that being a judge is not incompatible with being a poet also. I have had other proof of this fact. The best poem I have seen about the Panama Canal was by a judge whom I met in Washington a few years ago. It appeared in the Atlantic Monthly.

I spent my 80th birthday here at home with Julian's family and

Doctor Barrus. . . . The thing that stirred me most on my birthday was President Wilson's message to Congress, which went through me like a tidal wave, measuring the whole depth of my being. . . . It was a tremendous step to take — the declaration of War against Germany, but I cannot see that the world would be a desirable place to live in unless that monster of iniquity is crushed, and I rejoice that we have a chance to add lustre to our name as a republic by taking part in the crushing.

The Doctor and I have been dilligently working nearly the whole past week to dispose of the many letters of condolence, and of congratulation that have poured in upon me. I trust one more day will finish the pile. When I dictate a letter I walk on stilts — you will see proof of that in this one; but my heart is all right, and some time or other I hope to get my cat-tail penholder in my hands again.

If you come this way, do not fail to stop and break bread with us. I am in good hands here with the Doctor and her nephew, and later in the season I expect to be in even better hands with the Doctor and her two nieces at Woodchuck Lodge. . . .

The hepatica is just blooming here, the alders have shaken out their catkins, the crocuses are eaves-dropping under our windows, and next week I expect to find the arbutus in bloom on my way to Slabsides.

In her birthday letter to him, Mrs. Elizabeth Custer wrote, 'You take away the dread of eighty years by the way in which you meet them.' Mr. James Lane Allen said, 'I hope nothing weighs you down but the gratitude and affection of your fellow-men,' and Mr. Louis Agassiz Fuertes wrote, 'I, like a million others, bless the day you were born, and the benison of your life and labor.'

4. An Unlucky Turn

The unlucky turn which occurred at this period is recounted in the following letter which I wrote in late April, to Mr. and Mrs. Frank Talbot:

I don't like to tell you what I must, but it is not so bad as it might have been, and J. B. is sitting opposite as I write, reading the National Geographic Magazine. He just showed me the maps of 1776 and 1917 — of the world, — with our one little republic, in that far-off time; and now, with Russia gone white, too, there are but few black places left on the face of the world. . . . But this is a digression. You see I am trying to break it gently.

To come down to our little world at Riverby: we have been in an automobile accident and both J. B. and C. B. got hurt. It was all my fault. It happened on the eleventh. I was taking my second lesson in running the car. . . . Had been getting on nicely for two or

three miles. I guess J. B. had too much confidence in me. . . . After coming down a gentle grade, at a turn, for some unaccountable reason, I must have steered to the left. In a twinkling the car ran into a bank, tried to climb it, and overturned upon us. J. B. was completely hidden beneath the car. The upper part of my body was out, but one leg was pinned fast. A workman passing came to the rescue. When I told him to run for help — that Mr. Burroughs was under the car, — he cried, 'Oh, my God!' ran, and was soon back with others who lifted the car.

We were probably not in that perilous situation more than three minutes, but it seemed an eternity, for J. B. was so still I thought I had killed him. He said afterwards that he heard me imploring the men to hurry; so, knowing I was not killed, and not realizing my fear, he kept still to save his breath, his chest being in such a cramped position.

When I saw that he was not seriously hurt, I think it was the happiest moment of my life. Everything is relative. I had thought it was the end of everything. We were near Colonel Payne's when it happened. I had the men telephone for Julian (who came for us), and for Dr. Freston, who arrived shortly after we had reached the Nest and had got J. B. in bed, with hot-water bags around him, and brandy and strychnine down him.

As Dr. Freston could get no *crepitus* in the injured arm, we hoped it was not broken; still he treated it as a fracture; and the X-rays later showed that to be the case (the neck of the humerus). One of his ribs was probably cracked, and he had a contusion of the right wrist, and a few scratches on one leg. He had no symptoms of shock; and has been doing well right along. Of course the restriction of the arm is annoying, and will be; and at night he has difficulty in getting into a comfortable position; but he has suffered little pain and, on the whole, is a comfortable invalid. I do not mean to make light of it. Many times a day waves of contrition go over me for having brought it upon him; but all seems so light in comparison, after those moments of uncertainty and agony under the car.

At the time of the accident, I already had a broken finger on the right hand, and, as a result of the accident, two of my ribs were broken. (But now I can laugh and sneeze and stoop without pain.) My worst injury was the left leg — a bad contusion — the side of the car rested on the leg diagonally from ankle to knee. There's a bad cellulitis which will take time to subside. It would have been far more serious, but for the mud in which the leg was imbedded.

Now you know the worst. . . . He said he did not dare do anything but get well, knowing I would never forgive myself otherwise. . . . I had objected to his teaching me, urging that I wait and take regular lessons, but he had insisted. . . . It makes me sick and weak to think of it. . . . It has disarranged our spring plans, but J. B. says to tell you we will certainly try to get to Gloversville in June. . . .

He has the title for his new book — 'Field and Study' — and occupies himself watching the birds and reading and writing. . . .

We were a sorry lot at the Nest with our combined fractures, ecchymoses, infiltrations, and contusions. My nephew had sustained a fracture of the right forearm a few days before our accident, but, being a Benjaminite, was still able to lend a hand; and the neighbors were kind. What we had escaped made the ills we had seem trivial indeed. The splendid news of the French — the 25-mile line — heartened us a good bit; and visits from friends brightened the cold, cheerless days. Nor were all cheerless and cold. One day Mr. and Mrs. Poultney Bigelow came, bringing Lady Russell, the inimitable 'Elizabeth,' Lady Eaton, Miss Rose O'Neill (as fun-provoking as one of her own kewpie dolls), and Colonel Biddell.

[Journal] May 7. Very wet and chilly. Only grass can grow. . . . Many myrtle warblers here.

Arm doing well, I suppose, but a dull pain much of the time. Ribs well. Right hand not quite well. Arm clearing up, a dirty yellow now. Heart very steady since the accident. Eat no supper but cup of ovaltine and two graham wafers. Slept five or six hours last night. Feel well at heart. War worries me more than all else.

'The Happy Birds' — a good title — may stimulate me to write another bird article. My hunger for nature unabated.

May 8. . . . Walked to the woods yesterday along the old cedar lane — the lane where I found the golden-winged warbler's nest last season. My find yesterday was the nest of a turtle-dove on the top of the stone wall — a shallow depression in the stones lined with dry grass, straw and twigs — 2 white eggs. The blue-gray bird was well hidden on the blue-gray wall — the only dove's nest I remember to have found. Had she kept her place as I passed, I should not have seen her.

. . . Nights still long and hard to bear. Sleep but little in horizontal position. . . .

May 12. Still cold and sour. Purple finches, both sexes, cutting the hearts out of my ox-heart cherries this morning. . . . My 'shooing' them away they take as a great joke. . . . [When he had detected them snipping off the blossoms, he had said, 'Bad business for so charming a bird to be engaged in — a serious blemish on his character.'] . . . .

Charley Keeler and his friend, Mr. Cady, came at two and stayed till 8. Glad to see them. Mr. and Mrs. Elting bring me some trout, caught in the Neversink. . . .

A few events in that unfriendly May stand out. There was a visit from Messrs. Glen Buck and Ernest Thompson Seton,

when we sat far into the night listening to Mr. Seton's graphic tales, and his mimicry of the wild creatures' calls; there were visits from the Clyde Fishers, when the Doctor got beautiful firelight photographs of J. B.; there was a twilight talk between Mr. Burroughs and Mr. Thomas B. Harned, the latter adding reminiscences of Whitman's Camden days to those of the Washington years; and there was a memorable fireside talk when two of our young friends, soon to go to France, came for a farewell visit, and Mr. Burroughs, especially communicative, turned from the talk of War to poetry. After telling the young men of his first meeting with Emerson, he said, 'Alas! you boys of to-day can only meet him in his books.' Continuing:

> Emerson was always hungry for men, for superior men who could teach and stimulate him, and *meet* him. His first journey abroad was merely to meet a few notable men. What a contrast to poor me, who would steer clear of the notables!

He asked the youths if they read Wordsworth, and recited two of his favorite sonnets — 'O Friend! I know not which way I must look for comfort,' and 'The world is too much with us.' He quoted verses of Mr. Robert Loveman, and a prayer of Edward Hicks Terry. Poetry was a real refuge for him during the War.

In mid-May we took the long silent drive to Tongore, preceded by the gray hearse, the account of which is found in the Journal:

> We set out to inter the body of my poor wife, Julian, C. B. and I. Start at 9. Meet the Undertaker at the gate of the cemetery in Kingston. A slow, easy drive to Tongore. Reach there about 11, and I look into the open grave of her who, I expected, would look into my open grave. Five feet deep into an old glacier hill — the bottom into two feet of sand, the upper part gravel and drift. It is a grim joke to say I never looked into a healthier grave — the drainage perfect. In the rear of her father and mother, instead of beside them, as I had expected.
>
> The services [we had called for Dominie Chase in K.] are soon completed, and I hear the dry sandy shovelfuls of earth fall upon the coffin of her who was my wife for nearly sixty years. A beautiful spot, a beautiful view. I could see the school-house where I began my career sixty-three years ago, and many farm-houses of those whose children came to school to me.
>
> We drive to the school. As large a school as I had, 35 or 40 pupils,

but half of them, or more, foreign-born — not the bright, clear rosy cheeks I looked upon. The little school ma'am was very gracious; she knew of me, but did not know that I had preceded her in that school by more than sixty years. No legend of me in the place, it seems. I told the staring children that I had been a teacher there sixty-three years ago, but that I did not see a face there I had seen then. They looked very solemn at my attempted joke.

Strange that he should have forgotten an incident of that day which proved that there was still a legend of him about the place! A lad by the roadside told him that he was then reading a book 'about how boys become men' which he, when he had taught there, had given to one of his pupils. Teacher's and pupil's name, the lad said, were written on the fly-leaf.

[Journal] May 21. Roosevelt and his army of 250,000 turned down by the government. The precious traditions of the army must not be violated! The government fiddling while Rome is burning, and the Huns flourish! Thoughts of the War still engross all others.[1] . . .

Commenting on its being 'the coldest, darkest May for over thirty years,' he said, 'The only good I got out of it was notes on the "Spring Bird Procession." Part of it written — hope to make a fine paper.'

Cabot's Emerson is inseparably associated with those nights of restlessness and pain, when neuritis in the injured arm kept him from sleep; sometimes when I would hear him roaming about the house, trying first one chair, bed, lounge, and then another, I would go to the rescue, to see what two heads could do to make one lie less uneasily. Reading aloud sometimes helped; sometimes hot arm baths, or light massage; sometimes nothing would woo the fickle goddess. One was sometimes at wit's end, too, to get the right kind of guests — those who did not encourage his talking about the accident, and throw him back upon himself.

In time, the use of a cross-bar over the veranda steps, and passive arm movements, strengthened the inactive muscles. Before summer was over he was bragging that he could rub his bald pate and brush his back hair as well as ever. Still the hypochondriacal mood was slow in yielding. He often complained that his 'baby arm' was 'worse than a pair of twins.' His hypersensitiveness to pain was so great for a time that on

[1] One day he said of the War: 'What a new page in English history! A pity Tennyson couldn't be alive to sing it, and Carlyle to thunder it!'

experiencing a tiny abrasion on the foot he declared the pain from it was 'fiendish,' and that if it kept up, the foot might have to be amputated! At this doleful prediction I laughed outright, and from that time adopted a course of less apparent attention, which proved salutary. Apprehension soon disappeared, and he regained his sense of proportion.

One hot afternoon in June, after several days of much company, as the last guest drove away, Mr. Burroughs sighed comfortably, saying, 'Now, hasn't everybody come that's going to for a day or two?' Assenting feelingly, I threw myself on one of the veranda beds, luxuriating in the thought of a quiet Sunday.

'I'll go and pick some strawberries,' he said, 'and we will have our supper out here. I can get it — you just rest.' He could scarcely have reached the strawberry-bed when a light, quick step sounded along the gravel path, and a girlish face appeared above the railing. Tripping up to the cot, the stranger said:

'Doctor Barrus, I'm Nora Waln. Thee wrote me I could come to call between the 21st and 23d, but thy letter only reached me this morning. I had ten minutes to get the train. Was it very dreadful? I just *had* to see Mr. Burroughs — isn't he here? I will stay just a bit to see him, and then go and find some place in the neighborhood over Sunday.'

She had never seen him; had come from Pennsylvania — had come, she said, without even a nightgown or a toothbrush. Of course I told her she was to stay with us, and should have a cot with me on the veranda. When Mr. Burroughs returned with the berries, the radiant little stranger was snugly ensconced on her cot, chatting happily. On the situation being explained to him, he gave me a look of comical dismay, but was, as one knew he would be, speedily reconciled to so charming an invasion. In his Journal as he wrote of her coming on a sudden impulse, he added:

> She wins our hearts by her simplicity and genuineness. Well read, too, a Swarthmore College girl. Says 'thee' and 'thou' so prettily. Knows the birds well, and has written and printed things about them.

One day when Mrs. Joel Spingarn and her children called at Riverby, finding Mr. Burroughs on a high ladder in one of the

cherry trees, they photographed him there. His eagerness to secure some of the cherries from the robins and orioles had made him ignore his disabled arm. In Frost Valley, some days later, his arm still in a sling, he waded the deep, swift waters of the Neversink for trout, while his friends from a distance watched with trepidation lest, while thus handicapped, he slip in midstream on the mossy stones. That night, he wrote in his Journal:

> The old sweetness and charm of the place. . . . Fish two hours; take 9 trout — enough. . . . The soft murmur of the stream fills all the vale. It is like audible silence. . . .

At Woodchuck Lodge, July 6th, he writes:

> The silence, the breadth of outlook, the sweet, grassy odors, . . . how welcome it all is after the noise [boats and trains], the shut-in-view, and the stale, unprofitable Riverby. . . . Three sick months there have nearly spoiled the place for me. Here I breathe again the air of youth, and drink the water of purity. . . .

Willing little handmaidens did the simple housework; the Laird of the Lodge wrote, or lounged in the hammock, writing at times on 'The Happy Birds.' In the evening we read aloud 'Mr. Britling Sees It Through.' Mr. Burroughs taught one of the young girls to run the car, but before many weeks took the wheel again, and was soon driving as usual.

One Sunday morning, just as I had settled down to write, I heard a stranger's cheery voice greeting Mr. Burroughs on the porch. He had walked up across the hills. There was no mistaking Mr. Burroughs's interest in the animated talk that drifted in through the window. No writing that day! So, mustering as hospitable a glance as I could, I went out and invited the caller to dinner. He already knew my name, and said he should not have dared to venture there had I not pictured 'Our Friend's' approachability. The acquaintance proved one of the heartiest, staunchest friendships of Mr. Burroughs's later years. He wrote that night in his Journal:

> Mr. William Roy from Montreal — a landscape architect of the right sort — a fine fellow — glad he came. He made an excellent impression. . . . Scotch descent. Loves the men and books I do. . . . Will come again. . . .

That afternoon, as he was talking to Mr. Roy, mention

being made of the rose-breasted grosbeak, Mr. Burroughs remarked that he had not seen one there that season; when, interrupting himself, he said, 'Why, there's one now!' as a young one flew in on the veranda, alighting on a row of books above one of the cots. From the butternut tree across the road the parent bird, the male, called; but the little bird huddled, unmoved, until, coaxing it to perch on a walking-stick, Mr. Burroughs released it.

The genesis of his essay 'Orchard Secrets' ('Field and Study') was in the bird-nesting mentioned in the July Journal:

> Find five nests in the orchard — cedar-bird, red-eyed vireo, goldfinch, chippie, and kingbird. How scared the cedar-bird looked! Stood up straight and stiff as a poker, with depressed crest and plumage, but made no sound. Harriet and Eleanor found the nest of the cedar-bird and the goldfinch — my eye had missed them. Another nest, the identity of which is yet to be settled.
>
> July 27. The War news depresses me — the collapse of Russia, and the success of the German sub-marine blockade. The squabbling and delays at Washington are also depressing and disgusting.
>
> 28. Oh, to again live in a world free from the agony and suspense of War! Shall I ever see that day? I fear not. The thought of it comes over me hourly like an eclipse of the sun. It darkens everything.
>
> I hear the indigo bunting singing, singing, in a remote field all the morning. He is perched on the top of some tree — a bit of topaz[1] amid the green; and he sings as if all the world were listening. What is he singing to? His brooding little brown mate on her nest in the low bush may hear him. Does it cheer and comfort her? We are humans when we ask this question. She broods on just the same when he stops singing.

Sometimes when he would see the girls coming to their cots on the veranda, in the moonlight, he would say, 'Here come the lunar moths.' Their good-night kisses he called 'moth kisses,' and whimsically parodied Aldrich in plaintive tones:

> When I was young and in my prime
> I could get kissed most any time;
> Now I am old and getting gray,
> I can't get kissed but once a day.

[1] One wonders if he did not mean to write 'sapphire,' though there *are* blue topazes.

One of those early August days he came in from the garden bringing a fine large pink potato, an early-rose: 'There's my first potato. We'll have some more soon. I picked the pocket of that hill — the hill doesn't know it, and won't miss it.' He handled the potato as if it were some rare object.

In mid-August when he motored down to Riverby for a few days, he stopped at Tongore on the way, to visit his wife's grave. From a distance we saw him pulling the ragweed from the grave. When he rejoined us he said, 'How it would distress her if she knew it was there!'

Later, when selecting a gravestone, he hesitated long between one he thought she would like, and a more modest one that pleased him better. A year later he regretted not having decided on the more imposing one.

'See what I have done!' he said one day as he came in with a woebegone look, a bird's nest in his hand. Thinking the nest empty, he had poked it down, and to his dismay had found four tiny birds huddled in it. Despite his eighty years, and weakened arm, he climbed the tree and placed the nest as nearly as he could in its old site. Though unable to detect the parents on their visits to the nest, he rejoiced some days later on climbing the tree again, to find the young birds thriving.

To a member of a Field Club in Rhode Island he wrote characteristically:

> I cannot speak from experience [as to] what it means to belong to a Naturalists Club, since I never belonged to one, but I can see it must have many advantages. It is certainly easier to walk in company than alone, and in the study of nature the multiplied knowledge and enthusiasm of several people ought to be a great advantage; but let me urge you also to cultivate the habit of solitary walks. You will get a little closer to the wild things when alone than in company; — have closer communion with Nature, and absorb more of her spirit. Go with your club on Saturdays, but go alone on Sunday.

September days at the Lodge were busy with making mint jelly, canning peaches, tanning woodchuck skins, picking apples, and entertaining callers, in much of which Mr. Burroughs lent a hand, besides writing on astronomy. One noon when he came down from the barn study, he said, 'Well, I have been among the stars all the morning.' 'And I, among the pots and pans,' I rejoined. 'This afternoon I'll stay among the pans and help you peel the peaches.'

In mid-September, Mr. Roy came on from Montreal and superintended the planting of vines, shrubs, and native plants around the Lodge, hitherto so bare. From the site of 'Grandfather's house' homely native things were brought — tansy, motherwort, and mallow; woodbine from the Old Home; traveler's-joy from the fence-borders; closed gentians from near the old stone schoolhouse; jewel-weed, red-berried elder, and hobble-bush from the head of the Pepacton; and asters and golden-rod from the 'Long Woods.' It was dark and cold one of these nights on reaching home with our carload of treasures, but the Laird of the Lodge had supper on the table and a fire in the Franklin. A memorable evening around the fire followed; for our Scotsman knew his Burns as well as did John Muir or Francis Browne, and regaled Mr. Burroughs with many a verse, and many a story, inimitably told.

The next morning, as we were enjoying a huge Montreal melon brought by our guest, Mr. Burroughs spied through the window a hermit thrush feeding on the spikenard berries — the first hermit he had ever seen at the Lodge. As the talk drifted to the hermit's song, the guest was asked to read aloud the description of it in 'Wake-Robin,' and when he finished, the author said: 'It's putting it on pretty thick, isn't it? but your Scotch brogue brings out the flavor as salt does the melon.'

Alone at Riverby during October, he presses the cup of his loss and loneliness to his lips:

> Very lonely. Oh, the falling leaves! They move me. The [stone] house is like a tomb. Felt her loss afresh when I went over to the kitchen door and found the leaves clustered there as if waiting for something. They were waiting for her broom. For over forty years it had not failed them, and now they lay there, dulled and discouraged. Oh, the unswept stones and entry way — what a tale they tell! I never could have believed I should miss her so much. Yet I do not want her back — but if I could only know she was well and happy somewhere in the land of the living! Over forty years we two sat here and saw our days go by; saw the leaves come and go, and the seasons change. Now they come and go for her no more — the dust in her house, the leaves at her door, are undisturbed.

In early November he was wheedled into buying a new suit of clothes, though stoutly contending that the old one was good enough. When told that a certain suit would look well

with his dark gray overcoat, he replied irritably, 'I don't care about that. What does the hermit thrush know about whether his wing and tail feathers match?' Reminded that he wasn't a hermit thrush, and was only a sham hermit, he decided on the gray suit, but, still a bit testy, declared he would be in misery trying to keep that crease in the trousers. A day or two later, however, he was heard to call attention to his new clothes.

After he had watched a friend operate on a case of appendicitis (just to see if he could stand it without fainting), he said the surgeon's exploratory hand in the abdomen of the patient reminded him of his own hand in the apple-hole at Home, when he would reach in and diagnose the various kinds of apples by the feel of them. Although he sat through the operation, he became deadly pale as it progressed. The technique of the modern operating-room was a revelation to him. That night he told his friends that he had seen a surgeon take a woman apart and put her together again, and that he and the woman both lived through it!

'C. B.,' he said to me one day, apropos of nothing, 'I have two strong instincts that are my safeguard — my instinct for health, and my instinct for the truth. Put *that* in your book when you write it.'

After he saw, in the studio of his sculptor-friend Pietro, the model of a symbolic statue of France and America, he wrote the sculptor:

> I was greatly pleased with your design for a Franco-American monument. . . . The sister republics have long been one in spirit, and now they are one in arms, and your beautiful statue admirably expresses this union.
>
> A common enemy seeks the destruction of both, which he might have accomplished singly, but which he can never do with the two united, supported by the heroic efforts of Great Britain. In the hands of these three nations rests the hope of Democracy, and the well-being of the world. Your native country comes in as an heroic fourth.
>
> France is a heavenly flame, and in glorifying her, we do everlasting honor to ourselves. . . . She was our friend in time of great need, and now we eagerly back her up in her hour of sore trial.
>
> Give your art full swing, and thus perpetuate the close friendship and coöperation of the two republics.

'Nature has on her white shift this morning,' he said on

coming downstairs the morning before Thanksgiving. 'This ought to make "tracking snow." I may go on the mountain with John for foxes'; and he left home for the family reunion at Hobart.

Early in December, bringing in the morning paper, he said, ruefully, 'The news isn't very good — the Germans have made a dent in General Byng's line.' A little later he added despondently, 'Oh, I wish I could migrate to another planet till this War is over!' But the next day, as he read aloud the President's message, he said fervently, 'It is worth living in such times as these, when we have a leader who can lead — who thinks so clearly, and expresses himself so forcibly.' He fairly gloated over the epithet, 'the Intolerable Thing.'

'Then you don't want to migrate to another planet?'

'No, I want to stay right here till every man, woman, and child in Germany has learned what we have got to teach them.' And he gathered up the potatoes laid out for him to bake in the ashes in his Study, putting back one, in his frugal way, saying that was more than was needed, and went cheerily over to his morning's work.

Likewise when he asked for an apple, and the outside leaves of a cabbage, to take to his rabbit who lived under the Study, his ingrained frugality showed itself — he would take but a part of the leaves — I had brought too much — he did not want 'to corrupt the rabbit' by so lavish a supply. It was the same when in the woods or fields: no matter how abundant a flower was, he would have us content with gathering only a few; he would never let us pluck more than three spikes of the closed gentian that grows by the old stone schoolhouse at Roxbury; but there was good reason for that last forbearance.

One morning as he stood by the window looking upon the white world without, he said: 'Just look at that sparrow's nest in the hedge, and I never saw it all summer! and there's a goldfinch's nest over in the maple that I never saw, much as I looked for it. I knew it was there somewhere. I guess I'll trade off my eyes for another pair.'

'I have a start on a new essay,' he said a few mornings later. 'I thought of it before I got up,' and he quoted the opening sentence. When told that it suggested a quatrain from the Rubáiyát, he said, on hearing it, 'Go write it out for me — maybe I can use it — I'll tend the bacon.'

[Journal] December 15. The Atlantic returns my paper, 'Is Nature Cruel?' (Paper no good — reject it myself — shall re-write it.) Mind still active, and sleep good.

My poor wife came home one year ago yesterday from Hospital, never to go away again, except on the last journey.

'Don't forget to order suet from Mott the next time he comes,' he called back one morning on starting for his Study. 'I saw the chickadee come there and look yesterday, and go away disappointed.'

When urged to let Hud do more of the heavy work at the woodpile, he protested, 'No, if I saw and split my own wood, I can look my fire in the face without blushing.'

The day he got the combined news of the disaster at Halifax, of the loss of some ground by the British, and of a good many Italians taken prisoners, he was disheartened, and said menacingly, 'I wish I had the Devil by the hind-leg'; but in a few minutes he was calling, 'Come and see the golden-crowned kinglet in the barberry bushes!' Thus so often did Nature steal upon his sad and restless moods with the solace she alone could give.

As I sat reading Mr. Harper's 'Life of Wordsworth' on Christmas Eve, and came upon the astounding news that Wordsworth had had a daughter born out of wedlock, an involuntary exclamation escaped me. Mr. Burroughs inquired the cause. He, too, was astonished. He was silent for a while, then, as he poked the fire, said: 'He wasn't such a bad fellow, after all. It is proof that he was human — the breeding-instinct got the better of him — it will not down.'

Before he went up to bed, after listening to Schumann-Heink's singing of 'Stille Nacht,' he asked dubiously, 'Is she singing that in German?'

'Yes, but don't think of that now — it is German at its best.'

'It is divine, anyhow,' he added fervently.

Christmas was deeply shadowed by tidings of the death of our nearest neighbor, Mrs. John Jewell Smith, and of the burning of 'Troutbeck,' the former home of Myron Benton. He wrote the present owners, the Spingarns, that the destruction of that loved place made a wound in his very heart.

On Christmas day there came from a correspondent in

Indiana a poem called 'Suispectus,'[1] which, its author wrote, was the outgrowth of having read the religious writings of John Burroughs. Much impressed with a poem so well embodying his own creed, Mr. Burroughs said, 'That is one of the things which should be read when I come to the end of the long journey. Make a note of it.' Then, as though regretting that he had introduced another shadow in the day, he exerted himself to be more cheerful. After listening to some music in the firelight, and drinking a cup of ovaltine, he read a little in Epictetus, and said a cheery 'Good-night.'

A few evenings later, while looking into the fire, he mused: 'I wonder what made Professor Sellick, of Cooperstown Seminary days, come into my mind now. I remember once when I had demonstrated a theorem in geometry, I paused. I must have looked puzzled in some way, for he asked, "Well — are you satisfied?" "I am if you am," I replied. He laughed, but he didn't correct my grammar.' Continuing:

'Once I was to introduce him before our debating society, where he was to read a paper, but I made some vague and rambling remarks, and sat down, without mentioning him.

'"Did you call me, sir?" he asked.

'"Yes, sir," I said.'

Laughing at these and other *gaucheries* of his youth, he said:

'Sometimes I wish those old fellows could read some of the stuff I write now. They might be glad that the callow youth they struggled to help had finally got so he could make a point when he tries. It takes a literary man a long time to find himself. He drifts along — dreams dreams, and tries this and that, and, by and by it comes out — what his distemper is.'

Whenever I heard Mr. Burroughs coming up the veranda steps saying tenderly, 'You litzy-bitzy thing,' I knew the song sparrow that wintered there was out in the leaves. When asked if he supposed his talk made any impression upon the bird, he replied that all creatures are probably more or less influenced by kind tones; and added pityingly, 'Poor bird! It bids fair to be a bitter cold night. — I must let the water out of the pump'; after doing which he sighed wearily that the time for 'unbuttoning' had come again.

[1] See *In Remembrance* — a memorial booklet published by the John Burroughs Memorial Association.

Late that month he wrote a short paper called 'Germany's Appeal to Science.'

One day at dinner, when some remark was made about the Bolsheviki, he said testily, 'I don't know anything about him, and care less.' At our exclamations of astonishment, he queried, 'Who *is* he, anyhow, a usurper?'

Although he had said he was not reading a thing about Russia, we had not taken him literally. Amused himself at his *faux pas*, he told of an old Roxbury neighbor — Olney Hewitt — who once said he was going to Albany to call on *that Legislature*, and tell him a few things! Then, speaking of the absurdity of the name: 'Bolsheviki! How did *I* know it wasn't a man! The papers said Bolsheviki had removed Ker — who was it? Kerensky — yes — well, *he's* a man, isn't he?' And he muttered imprecations on the heathenish names: 'The Bolsheviki, or Bolshekivi, or whatever it is, makes me think of what Emerson said of mankind — "It's a damned rascal!"'

Acknowledging a Christmas gift from Judge Talbot, he wrote warmly:

> It was good of you to take pity on my cold hands. They have been looking for just such protection as you sent. . . . I will make my old mittens do the handling of the wood. . . . A friend has knit me a pair of woolen socks which keep my feet warm, even when I get bad War news; another has knit me a helmet in which I can face any wind; still another has knit me a sweater, which puts a good warm zone around me; and another has sent me some wristlets, which, with your mittens, will keep my hands in trim for wielding a still more vigorous pen against the unspeakable Hun, I hope. So why should I go South when the South has come to me in the shape of all these fine woolen garments? I look upon the ice-bound and snow-bound Hudson with as much composure as I ever did in my life. The Doctor's prayer, 'Give us this day our daily wood,' never goes unanswered. Every afternoon you could see me at my post in front of the pile of oak and hickory.
>
> I had a War paper in the magazine section of the Sunday Times for the ninth, which was of a quite different character than that of the Tribune letter. I think it might interest you. I blew a good blast for Wilson in the Sun of the thirteenth, also.

5. Right Makes Might

'I guess I have got about to the end of this might and right question,' said Mr. Burroughs on New Year's Day, 'but this ("A Fallacy Made in Germany") states it differently than the

others. You know I can never let up on a subject till I have tracked it to its lair.'

At dinner he said that when he told Emerson that Thoreau, in his 'Maine Woods,' had confused the hermit and the wood thrush, Emerson had bristled up and said it could not be possible that Thoreau had made a mistake like that. 'I'd like to show him some of the many others I've found since; but the flaws are as nothing compared to the value of his contribution to literature. I want to write about his wheat and chaff, in a good-natured way, not severely, as Lowell did. Lowell's critique was clever and academic, but was an unjust indictment of Thoreau. What kind of a Harvard professor would Thoreau have made? and what kind of a bean-field philosopher would Lowell have made? Lowell attempted to write about nature, too, but it was mostly the nature he saw in books.'

'Perhaps if he had looked *out* of his Study Windows more, he might have done better with Nature.'

'Thank you, I will say that,' he rejoined.

On January 4th he sent the following reply to a brother author who had been told that Mr. Burroughs wished him to be his biographer:

DEAR G——,

Your letter came yesterday and was a surprise. The R——s are uncommonly anxious about my biography. I am not a bit so. No biography of me will be published as long as I am above board, if I can help it. None may ever be called for anyhow. My real biography is in my books. My life has had no such large and picturesque features as yours. It has been a life of quiet contemplation and enjoyment, and no person could write it who has not known me long and intimately, and sympathized deeply with my work.

The R——s suggested to me last summer, and again this fall, *that you wanted to do it*, and that you were the man. I was surprised because I thought your hands were full, and I knew you had no material to work on.

My friend, Dr. Barrus, has been collecting material for years, with my help; is ambitious to do the work; and I have encouraged her in this ambition; but I have told her frankly that I have my doubts about a woman being able to write the life of a man. She is inclined to be too much of a hero-worshipper, and to lack a disinterested point of view. But she has my sanction to try her hand at it, and while I am around to help her. Her friends, and mine, and the publishers, shall judge of the result. Her book, 'Our Friend J. B.,' has had a real success. I hear of it from friends and strangers continuously. If she should not fill the bill, it would be time enough to

select another biographer, which task would probably fall to my publishers; that is, if they think it worth while to include an account of my uneventful life in their series of American Men of Letters.

Dr. Barrus has many qualifications for the task: she knows my books better than I do myself, and she knows my antecedents and my youthful and later environment. She has a keen, penetrating, sympathetic mind, a good style, and an abiding love for biography. If she lacks other qualities, she might still produce a unique and valuable work. She has been such a great help to me for the past sixteen years in my literary work, copying and correcting and criticising my Mss., reading my proofs, and writing my letters, and, for these later years, living here and looking after the material well-being of my wife and me, that I have given her *carte blanche* to go ahead with the biography.

But I have not yet given up the idea of writing it myself, as you suggest, and as Dr. Barrus has often urged me to do.

As for R——, he is out of the question.

I was probably not direct enough and emphatic enough in my talk with the R——s, else they could not have misled you as they seem to have done. They are good friends of mine, and have shown me many and great kindnesses, and I should hate to give them pain, but they must leave me to go my own way in matters that intimately concern me.

I am very glad of your willingness to help in any way you can. Among my men friends there is none other I should turn to so expectantly as to you. I wish you all success in your own important work, stick to it, and keep it up to the same high standard of the other.

Fraternally yours

JOHN BURROUGHS

A remark which he made as he sat by the fire one winter evening shows how his mind was always wandering from the little to the big, from the particular to the universal: 'See that flame hovering and flickering, coming and going there above the fire, just as inevitable, just as fundamental, just as much an outcome of cosmic energy as are the whirling nebulæ where worlds are being created.'

On reading that Wordsworth and Dorothy melted into tears when they read the Eleventh Book of 'Paradise Lost,' he retorted, 'I'd melt into tears if I had to read it — but, the Eleventh Book may be better than I think it is — where's your Milton?' and, opening the book, he warned, 'If you have tears to shed, prepare to shed them now.' After a little, to the inquiry, 'Are you weeping?' he replied, 'Not yet — I don't believe I shall weep over it; but Milton's measure, his dignity,

his art, *are* wonderful — great organ-music. No other English poet is like him, so sonorous, so "in the grand style," as Matthew Arnold said. What a line that is — "To shun delights and live laborious days"! The march of his line is so stately. Maybe that was what was the matter with Wordsworth — he wept because he wanted to do it, and couldn't. The subject-matter certainly wouldn't cause tears.' He spoke, then, of Milton's sometimes repeating a word at the end of a line, which helped to give the antique grandeur to his verse. After he had gone upstairs for the night, one could hear him still repeating to himself,

'Fallen on evil times — fallen.'

One evening after reading of Scott's and Wordsworth's climb of Helvellyn, he said, 'I climbed Helvellyn — you know I speak of it in "Fresh Fields." It was like a great fat sheep with its flesh wrinkled — about as high perhaps as Old Clump.' Finding the passage, he read aloud his description, talking further of 'the fat voluptuous mountain.' 'Something like those we saw on the coast from Santa Barbara, but they were much higher and more wild. These were domesticated, like a lawn up there on the heights. You don't get that impression from Wordsworth. . . . We have the wild nature here. European nature has never been tamed, because she never was wild.'

One noon he came bringing a bird essay begun the previous summer in the Catskills. 'About our hunting nests in the orchard,' he said. 'You have copied parts of it before. I am never so happy in writing anything else as about nature — not even the Germans.'

Before he went South for the winter, he climbed the old sheep's-nose apple tree and placed nuts in the squirrel's hole there.

'What a surprised squirrel he will be when he finds them!' he said, as he charged Hud to feed cereal to the song sparrow, and keep the nuthatches supplied with suet.

Shortly after reaching Washington he was attacked by his old enemy, intestinal toxæmia, and spent most of the month in bed, in the home of his old friend Dr. Frank Baker.

At the National Museum he became interested in the studies of Dr. Ales Hrdlička, — of Americans whose ancestors

had been in America for three generations, — and allowed the anthropologist to take his measurements, and other data, for his records. (*See* Appendix.)

While at Tryon, North Carolina, he had an attack of catarrhal pneumonia, with a lingering convalescence, marked by unwonted taciturnity and depression. In his weakened state the news of the sinking of the United States transport, *Tuscania*, a rumor of Roosevelt's death, and the noise of artillery practice a few miles away, had an unfavorable effect upon him. It irritated him that all that artillery was wasted, instead of killing the enemy — him who grieved at the mishaps of the birds and chipmunks! When told that if the War lasted much longer, he could qualify as one of Whitman's 'race of savage old men,' he admitted it was so; that the War poisoned his blood and allowed to come to the surface feelings that had seldom found expression through all his life. One evening he broke out irritably: 'Are you always going to knit? I'm so tired of the everlasting knitting — women all over the world knitting — they will flood the world with their knitting.'

When told that the need was great, but that if it annoyed him, it could be done when he was not about, he said, 'Oh, no — if it only does any good — but I can't believe it is all needed.'

One day, with several degrees of fever, he insisted on dictating a short article for the Century Company, to accompany a book of Raemaeker's cartoons, 'America in the War.' It was a savage bit of writing, though he softened it somewhat, later. Unwontedly talkative that day, he lived over many experiences; events passed before him in a rapidly moving panorama, certain ones rousing anger and imprecations. It was a relief when he dwelt on happier scenes, as in this:

> I think of our days at Woodchuck Lodge last summer — of the girls — I see Harriet out on the stone-wall, half playing, half in earnest, picking currants — singing, swinging her arms, her cataract of golden curls in the sunlight. She was a poem — a picture of youth and joyousness — I shall never forget it. Oh, youth! youth!

Among the books we read during his convalescence were Traill's 'Coleridge,' Meyer's 'Wordsworth,' Benson's 'Fitzgerald,' Sidney Colvin's 'Keats,' Maeterlinck's 'Double Garden,' and some of Sainte-Beuve's essays. As soon as he

began to hear the Carolina wren and the cardinal, and was able to walk in the near-by woods, the hours hung less heavily.

Of Coleridge he said: 'Such a man fills me with envy — all his scholarly background of tradition and literature and philosophy. He seemed to know things from the jump — seemed to absorb learning. We have nothing like him and his kind in this country. The scholars did not emigrate here. Poor me! I have no background, no traditions, no literature and philosophy back of me — no deep, broad, scholarly natures — just the common workers who struggled with the conditions here and reared their families in this great crude nature.'

He said of Meyer's 'Wordsworth': 'It gives no picture of Wordsworth. There's nothing to make the man real to us — all abstractions we have no use for.' He thought a valuable book could be made of Watts-Dunton's 'Athenæum' articles but that his sonnets were not worth preserving. 'He can write respectable sonnets — many can do that — but few can write great sonnets; but who wants mere respectable sonnets?'

When in early March he began again to write in his Journal, after tracing his improvement, he continued:

> But I am not myself — inclined to be morose and silent, and take no pleasure in the company of others. C. B. has a hard time with me. Most things have a sickish look to me.
>
> Yesterday we picnicked in the woods by the Gillette House, a variation that I appreciated.
>
> I write a little and revise my MSS. Just been over the first volume of Watts-Dunton's Life and Letters — a commonplace record of a third or fourth rate literary man. Read Dr. Emerson's book on Thoreau — a feeble production. . . .
>
> The song of the toad last night, and two screech owls. We are on a knoll surrounded by pine and oak woods, very little wild life. Have heard the pine warbler and seen one blue-bellied salamander, but not one rodent of any species.
>
> I long to be back at Riverby out of the accursed South — feel that my own land and clime will bring me back to normal again. I can see nothing beautiful in the Southern landscape — the everlasting blood-red soil, and the dark pine woods, the dissheveled fields, the houses upon legs ready to run away, the mud-bespattered horses and vehicles and pedestrians, the absence of grass, etc. etc., all offend my eye.

Not only did the scenes offend his eye, it offended him to hear others comment on the beauty they saw; so we shared the empty seats in the car with others less often than would natu-

rally have been the case. His curt manner to the driver, who tried so hard to please him, was also greatly at variance with his normal ways; and to him, and many another, it was necessary to explain that this was due to illness.

On the day of the picnic at 'the Thousand Pines,' he roasted potatoes in the ashes and was much like his cheery self, though unwilling to invite others. 'I'm not in the mood,' he said; adding, with his old merry look, 'I can growl to you, or keep silent; but with others around, I would have to behave myself — *if I could*.' So we ate our luncheon, and read, and were silent; while the wind sighed in the pines; the fire crackled; occasionally a pine warbler twittered; and far beyond the Blue Mountains, the continual rumbling of the artillery camp came into the peaceful scene like a gnawing, disturbing thought.

At Tryon, after a call from Dr. Edward Emerson, he wrote in his Journal:

> . . . Strangely like his father in the upper part of his face, but not his father's strong chin and mouth. A good easy talker. A great event to me. The son of Emerson! Only a little gray. Moves and walks briskly. About 72.

One evening, speaking of the hope of immortality, he said: 'I know it is hard to face this question unflinchingly. We cherish the hope for our friends and ourselves, but I can see no grounds for the belief. Let us face the probability with what courage we can. . . . Perhaps if men would face this question more courageously, they would stop prating about "the better world," and live more worthily here — would stop "fixin' to begin to get ready to live," and really live, here and now — nothing more divine can ever come from the Eternal than this world that the theologians so despise. It is a pretty good world — I want no better.'

'Not even one with the "blood-red soil," and "the infernal Carolina mud" left out?'

'No [laughing], not even one without them. It's all "good" in the larger scheme of things — but mighty uncomfortable to motor through in a Ford.'

How easily he could reverse himself, or, rather, how quickly memory's geese were transformed to swan, is seen in the Journal, March 12th:

We leave Tryon today. Dr. Emerson gives me back my paper with valuable criticism. Happy thought to ask him to read it. I shall change it and make Thoreau more human.[1]

Glad to be off for home, but leave Tryon with a pang. Such a clean, salubrious land, with its breath of pine, and its soil of granite — an ideal climate. A truly antiseptic air, no mildew, no dampness.

[Journal] March 31. . . . A warm, soft, brooding day, a day like a fond memory.

We drive to the Ashokan Dam and to Wife's grave. Mr. Longstreth with us. A keen, quiet, sober, intelligent young man, author of a book on the Adirondacks.

Wife's grave looks neglected. Oh, what long, sad thoughts come to me as I look upon it! We drive around the Dam and down to Dr. Hull's old place where we eat our lunch. Then on to uncle Sam North's old place, and walk down the road to the farm where Wife was born. Much of it under water now.

Stand on the spot where I wrote 'Waiting' in 1862, in Dr. Hull's old office. . . .

A day crowned with sad and pleasant memories.

He was disturbed to find the stone at his wife's grave had been poorly set. It leaned a trifle. 'How it would distress her, if she knew it!' At the next visit, he took along tools and cement, and righted it.

At the Nest one morning in early April he came in from a walk beyond the railway track, where he had been hunting a red-wing's nest, carrying a shabby black oilcloth bag. 'I found this on the dump-heap — Julian's folks had thrown it there with rubbish from the attic. Can't you find room for it here? It is the bag I carried in 1854, when I made my first journey from home.' But for the quest of the bird's nest, it would have been irretrievably lost. It has since been one of the treasures at Woodchuck Lodge.

In April he went to Toledo for the unveiling of the heroic bronze statue of him ('The Seer,' by C. S. Pietro), which was presented to the city by Mr. W. E. Bock — his inability to disappoint his friends overruling his reluctance to take the journey, and to submit to so much ado.

[Journal] April 12. The day has arrived. A great crowd. 20,000 school children pass in review before me, bringing flowers. Over one

[1] Parts of this paper were published as 'A Critical Glance into Thoreau' in the *Atlantic*, and later expanded as 'Another Word on Thoreau' in *The Last Harvest*.

and one-half hours in passing. I stand there on the steps as smiling as a basket of chips. Then I greet the teachers inside the [Art] Museum. Pretty tired at night. All is vanity and vexation of spirit.

He looked none of this ennui as the gay procession was passing. The inspiriting national airs, the boys waving flags, the girls bearing flowers, and the vast throng out in front, made a memorable occasion.

That evening as he sat dozing before the fire, his host and the sculptor, returning from the city, remarked that they had just seen Douglas Fairbanks at the club.

'Oh, Papa,' cried the host's young daughter, incredulously, 'did you really see him? did you speak to him?' At her extravagant despair at what she had missed, Mr. Burroughs, puzzled, asked innocently, '*Who* is Douglas Fairbanks?' On being informed, he quite appreciated the humor of his host's explanation that, although the movie hero had arrived in the city that forenoon, the reception committee had kept him away from the unveiling ceremonies, lest Young America have no eyes for John o' Birds, or the statue of him.

On this trip he visited Polo, Illinois, where in youth he had taught school. In the quaint little home of Dr. James More, he sat in the library where, sixty-one years before, the Doctor, as Superintendent of Schools, had examined him for his teacher's license. 'It was the only time in my life,' said the Doctor, 'that I was a bigger man than John Burroughs.' The Doctor, then nearing nine and eighty, gave this account of the youthful J. B.:

> A young man, rather slim, with a very mobile, expressive face, bright, snappy [!] eyes, darkish-brown hair worn rather long, a very pleasant voice.
>
> He came in and asked to be examined for the position of schoolteacher. I put him on the stool and began plying him with questions, but found him so ready I didn't carry it much farther; and then I gave him the license to teach in Ogle county.
>
> I felt pretty chummy with him. We were born within five or six miles of each other in the Catskills. Subsequently he bought several books of me. One was Webster's Dictionary. He has done more with that Webster's Dictionary! — stringing words together so delightfully that he has brought the whole world to his feet.

Mr. Burroughs spoke of 'Cattie' Allaben, a girl whom he had known in the Catskills, who, with her family, had previously

moved there, and added: 'One girl drew me out here, and the girl I left behind drew me back East — I was between two magnets.' A pause and then, 'Both are in their graves now.'

As we drove past the brick church at Polo, Mr. Burroughs recalled having heard John P. Hale, United States Senator, make a campaign speech there. He could hardly credit that the house formerly occupied by Dr. Allaben was the one to which he had walked across the prairie to see his sweetheart. The old road was obliterated; additions had been made to the house; farms with trees now usurped the one-time virgin prairie.

The land as it slopes down to the railroad is all that looks familiar. I've stood here and seen wild geese, an acre or two of them, on the prairie. When I would come over from Buffalo Grove, it was a grass-grown road. I used to hear the boom of the prairie hens and the calls of quail. That undulating prairie — I used to see the fire-line leaping across the horizon.

At the house of Colonel Stevenson, where he had boarded, he recalled his pupil Sarah Hackett Stevenson, who became a well-known physician in Chicago. The schoolhouse had been replaced by a new one; the young teacher there seemed never to have heard of John Burroughs. It was pathetic to see him stand and look about yearningly for something familiar to link this place to the one he had known. Farther on, he descried, among some long, low red buildings on the Perkins farm, what was left of the little old schoolhouse, doing duty as a hog-pen. In his day, Buffalo Grove had been five or six miles long; he and one Heth had been wont to seek the more secluded parts to spout their orations, but no trace of a grove was then left.

'Nothing but the sky remains,' he said sadly, after a vain search for what he had come so far to see. He had tried to prepare himself for changes, but the reality gave him a pang. 'My heart ached for some token of the old days and old friends,' he wrote in his Journal. Chiding himself for his disappointment, he said: 'If every one was like me, there would be no progress. I am too fond of places and people. I can't bear the thought of changes in old places — can't bear to have my offspring scatter — you see how I am about Julian's leaving home. It is my weakness — excessive love of localities and of the Past.'

At home again, his fears that the Germans would get the Channel ports were soon dispelled by good news from the front, and, rejoicing, he fled to Woodchuck Lodge, to make garden, and escape the influx of May visitors at Riverby.

When a caller, commenting on the little Isabel, then living at the Nest, said, 'Her hair is just like corn-silk,' Mr. Burroughs rejoined, 'Yes, she is our Golden Bantam,' a name which stuck to the demure child thereafter.

'Golden Bantam has robbed me of my dish-towel,' he would complain with mock regret. Usually, if one objected to his drying the dishes, he would say: 'Force of habit — force of habit — let me do it. I have a half-guilty feeling if I shirk it.'

One day, after we had spent a long time over the essays he was editing for 'Accepting the Universe' (my part being to hunt for verbal errors and repetitions), he, growing tired of the revision, said, 'I'm going now to weed in your garden.' 'Well,' I retorted, 'I'll stay here and weed in yours.'

Sometimes after a crowd of visitors would leave he would say: 'They were nice people, but the world is full of nice people, and we have our work to do. Now let's be firm and say "no" to every one else till we leave for Roxbury. We must. You must help me if I weaken — but sometimes you weaken when I could hold out. Just see what we can do, when we are let alone!' (Indicating the huge pile of revised manuscript.)

And though we would solemnly swear, in a few days the calendar-pad would be filled again — for one reason or another the new exceptions seeming necessary.

In declining an invitation to a dinner at which it was proposed to organize an anti-tobacco club, Mr. Burroughs wrote that he was heartily in sympathy with the project; that he thought all smokers should be required to go into an underground cave to commit their nuisances. He added that the best men he had known had not used tobacco.

One day in early June, on a wild strawberry quest, his son and granddaughters with us, he found a bush sparrow's nest on the ground. It was always beautiful to see him find a nest — the way he stooped and parted the leaves over it, his hand arching caressingly as he disclosed it. 'See, Ursie, isn't that a gem?' his delight apparently as fresh as though it were the first nest he had ever found. We climbed to Sunset Rock, Julian carrying an axe and clearing out the choked trail. On

the summit a pair of mourning doves cried, 'Woe, woe, woe,' as they flew away.

Occasionally he would go over to Slabsides for a long, quiet forenoon of writing, perhaps calling out as he left, 'I'll be back in time to chop the cabbage,' — a self-imposed task — no one could chop it fine enough to suit him. It is amusing to see in an essay about him, read before the American Academy of Arts and Letters, in 1921, that he disregarded such trivial matters as clothing and food. Clothing, yes, so long as it was warm and comfortable; but few are given to taking more thought about what should be eaten, and how it should be prepared, than was he, albeit it was chiefly on dietary grounds. Still, his taste was so keen and discriminating that within the limits of a simple diet he got, from his food, the pleasure, not of the gourmand, but of the epicure. He detected a great difference between peas and corn just picked and those gathered even an hour or two before cooking. In his later years he learned with much satisfaction from Dr. F. V. Coville that it had been conclusively demonstrated that the sweetness of corn rapidly leaves it on removal from the stalk. His long-held opinion had not needed the support of science; still he was glad to have it to convince those who thought him notional in this respect.

The news along the Western front in mid-June gave him a new lease of life. When he rejoiced at the Americans killing 700 and taking 350 prisoners, it came over one afresh what a thing the War had done to us, that we could so rejoice, and lose sight of the suffering and sorrow involved.

When returning a book by Bishop Darcy, 'God and Freedom in Human Experience,' he wrote to Father Huntington at the Holy Cross Monastery:

> Some parts of it go counter to my naturalism. I can't stand any theological conception interjected into the scheme of Nature. Such a conception lies in my mind as a stone might in my stomach, — it will not digest and assimilate. I suppose I am an out and out pantheist. But I remember that Emerson says pantheism magnifies rather than belittles God. . . .

At Roxbury, one July morning, he brought in a daisy fleabane, and, holding it up for us to look at through his pocket-glass, said, 'See the wonders there — those two great dragons crawling about [two minute insects]. Look into the heart of

Nature anywhere, and you find marvels and mysteries manifold.' Later in the day he came to the house bent and almost staggering under the weight of his gun and two woodchucks, one, the largest he ever saw, weighing more than sixteen pounds. He tanned the skin of the largest one, and buried both carcasses in the garden, 'in the interests of reciprocity.' The next day he got to cogitating about the smaller 'chuck, for he had found the hole where the bullet went in, but not where it came out; and was so puzzled that he dug up the 'chuck to see if he could solve the mystery.

'Digging into "the heart of Nature"?' I called to him as he patiently explored that exhumed 'chuck. He was rewarded for this unsavory quarter of an hour's search of the bullet by finding it lodged along the spinal column.

To Candace Wheeler, ten years his senior, he wrote of cheerful yesterdays, busy to-days, and hopeful to-morrows:

I was greatly pleased to get a letter from you. Had I known you were so near while I was at the Childs', I should certainly have called on you. The sight of you always helps one to grow in the grace of serenity and poise. Also had I known you were at Spartanburg last winter, you would have seen me. Part of February and March we were at Tryon, N.C. What pleasure it would have been to have had you with us a few days. We had a furnished bungalow in the woods and lived in a very quiet, cosy way. We saw many of the soldiers, and one day went out to see the artillery practice six miles north of us. How fine the boys looked! I wanted to hug each one of them. They are going to be a bitter surprise to the Huns before they have done with them. They are game; they are resourceful and manly, and, man for man, will beat the Huns easily.

The War is the one unfailing thought that is with me night and day, as I dare say it is with you. . . .

I keep pretty well and active, though I cannot grow old as serenely as you do. I do not dread the future, but I love the present, and I find this world good enough for me. It is a mine of inexhaustible riches. I still drive my Ford car, hoe in the garden, saw and split my wood, and use up good ink and paper. I have three new volumes nearly ready for the printer. . . .

I recently read your account of your first visit to Onteora with your brother.[1] It was very beautiful and touching. . . . This is a world of grass and clover and cattle on a hundred hills. In a short article in the next Harpers, called 'A Midsummer Idyl,' I try to paint some of its features.

I am just reading Conan Doyle's 'The New Revelation' (Spiritism), but do not get much satisfaction. I am eager to be convinced

[1] *Yesterdays in a Busy Life:* Candace Wheeler.

of its truth, but my reason is obstinate and will not be hoodwinked. I have long been convinced that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our old philosophy, but I am in doubt about the truth of this new 'revelation.' . . .

One morning in July, Mr. Burroughs said: 'I have written a little thing about the bluebird just now — the bird with the soft gentle ways — a bird without a fault — it is in my diary. I said that in my heaven there would be bluebirds on the nearest boughs.' The passage is found in 'Nature and Natural History' ('Field and Study'). He speaks there of how engaging is the bluebird's habit of returning in the autumn to its old nesting-site and lingering fondly about, peeping into the deserted cavity and warbling softly. Can one wonder that this trait in the bird would appeal strongly to him, with his persistent yearning for his Old Home?

In mid-July, on the Massachusetts coast with his son and family, he wrote in his Journal:

I loaf on the sands and see and hear the lazy swells roll in. It is good to be here — sand, sea, and sky, gentle breezes, a quiet surf, but water too cold for me to bathe in. . . . Beach paved along its margin with worn fragments of granite of all hues and textures — a marvellous display of varieties of crystalline rock — some of rare beauty. I would like to take enough home to pave my door-yard.

Later in the month, still at Ocean Bluff, he wrote of his varied interests:

. . . Old Ocean is still scrubbing down his shores with the purest of sand and the clearest of water, a task he never finishes. . . . Thursday we drove down to Plymouth and took off our hats to Plymouth Rock. It is no bigger than the rocks my father's oxen used to draw in my youth, but it looks as if it had felt the effects of all the homage that has been done it. It is worn and shiny as if from the touch of hands.

John and I have some fun. He has a camp in a secluded place amid the sand dunes where he builds a fire, often all by himself. I have joined him three times after supper. Last night I showed him how to bake a potato in the ashes. He is quite a character. He gets on his bathing-suit and runs by the hour up and down in the edge of the surf. I call him the Atlantic racer. He eats like a soldier, and it is hard to keep him filled up. I am going to show him how to bake a fish at his camp.

[Journal] July 23. Very hot, 98 in shade. I spend much time on beach wading in the cold water with only my underwear on. After

supper we drive in the car and by chance find the old home of Daniel Webster, and the cemetery where he is buried. I linger long around his grave. The estate is large and fine — a fit abode for a great man. There is no marble or granite monument at the grave, but a very large mound of earth above his remains to emphasize his greatness. His name, without dates, is carved on a small marble slab fixed along the top. A bronze tablet sunk in a granite block by the roadside gave us the clew.

One evening after returning to Roxbury, in speaking of his visit to Webster's grave (Marshfield, Massachusetts), he said:

As I stood by his grave it seemed I could almost see the man himself. I thought of his career — that great mind — almost a Jove — then to come down like a rocket! If his moral nature had been equal to his mental powers, he would have been one of the greatest men that walked the earth. His mind had great simplicity. He was the greatest constitutional lawyer we ever had, could handle a subject with great simplicity and conviction.

He then recited passages from one of Webster's speeches, learned in youth, his tone and expression showing how much the eloquence still moved him.

On August 9th he sent the following letter to Roosevelt:

When I saw Quentin's picture in the Outlook and read the editor's fine tribute to him, my heart bled afresh over the loss the country had suffered in his death, and the overwhelming grief that must inevitably have come to you and his mother. . . .

I know that with your grief is mingled the satisfaction that he gave his life for a great cause — in fact, met his fate like a hero in the supreme crisis of the world. How nobly all our youth have faced this same crisis. It seems as if they were all Quentin Roosevelts.

I hope and pray your other sons may be spared to you, and to add lustre to the name of the American Soldier. It is a grand but fearful thing to have sons at such a time. How gaily and even eagerly our youth depart for the battle-front in France! They feel in their hearts that it is a holy crusade against the most despicable foe of mankind the world has ever seen. I rejoice that you are not over there. Your friends know that the chances would be greatly against your ever coming back. We need you here to help keep us up to the fighting-point.

If the country had heeded your warnings and counsel two years or more ago, we would have gained all this time in getting ready to meet the crisis that you saw was close upon us.

President Wilson has had a stupendous task thrust upon him, and he has acquitted himself well. It seems to me all that words can do

he has done; but two years from now we shall want a man of your temper and resolution to finish the job.

As you know, I am not of the fighting kind; but since this War began I believe my blood has turned redder in my veins; every globule in it has felt like a miniature bomb, and if I had been a young man I think I should have challenged Fate as your sons did. At least, I flatter myself by thinking so.

Anxiety over the War has added greatly to my burden of 81 years, but I am cheered by the thought that I may yet live to see the utter defeat and humiliation of the arch foe.

I heard with deep concern of your illness last winter while I myself was in North Carolina, ill in bed. They gave me a great shock one morning over a wicked newspaper rumor. I trust there has been no serious break in your health since. The country knows that your spirit thrills with the same vigor as of old.

With deep sympathy and true affection for you and Mrs. Roosevelt, I am as ever,

Your faithful

Oom John

In Colonel Roosevelt's reply he agrees with Oom John that there had been nothing finer in our history than the way our young men went eagerly and gladly to France to fight for a high ideal. He should, he said, never cease to regret that he himself was not allowed to go; he would not have expected to come home alive. One gets a rare glimpse of the tender side of the Colonel in reading his confession that at times it seemed almost more than he could bear to sit at home in ease and comfort and safety while his sons were facing dreadful danger. And then, the patriot again speaking: 'It is a terrible thing that death should come to the young; but it is even more terrible, of course, if the young fear to face death in a great crisis, for a great cause.' He concludes affectionately with the assurance that if Oom John *is* eighty-one years old, he is not a really old man yet; and that they will come together when the War closes and shake hands over the defeat of the archfoe of civilization.

An article in the 'Atlantic' by Professor Jacks ('Our Common Foe'), stimulated Mr. Burroughs to write again on the fallacy of attributing cruelty to Nature. After much rearranging of the manuscript, he selected from it a short paper which he thought to call 'Nature Misrepresented,' but on hearing the title read, with the author's name immediately following, he was rather startled at the sound of it — 'Nature

Misrepresented. By John Burroughs.' The essay was later published in the 'North American Review,' under the title 'Is Nature Cruel?'

His homage for the Sage of Concord was reflected even in his dreams. At breakfast one morning he said: 'I dreamed of Emerson again — I saw him three or four times. Once I took off my hat with both hands [illustrated the act]. He seemed to be mingled with my dreams all night.'

In 'A Strenuous Holiday'[1] Mr. Burroughs has written of his auto-camping trip to the Great Smoky Mountains in the summer of 1918, there giving character-sketches of his triple-headed host, Edison-Ford-Firestone. Details of their gypsying are found in a letter written in late August from Bolar Spring, West Virginia:

. . . I am writing this on my knee beside the camp-fire at 7.30, while breakfast is being got ready. Mr. Ford is standing with his back to the fire on the other side, talking with a caller. Mr. Firestone is warming his hands over the coals. Edison is not up yet — yes, he is just out, holding his hand in front of his face in mock repentance for being up so late. He is a great character, and we are all devoted to him. Whenever the cars stop he gets out, collects a handful of flowers and brings them to me — half a dozen times each day — and I name them for him. Yesterday he brought me a monarda. . . . He is now, at 8.30, sitting near the fire reading Channing's 'Poet-Naturalist.' His sententious utterances often make us all laugh. I help him out on the geology and botany as we pass along.

We move very slowly — only 50 miles yesterday. The larger the company, the slower we go. We have two big cars, two Fords, and two trucks with supplies and camp equipage — too much of everything.

. . . What scenery we have beheld! Wonderful every day — grander Catskills — about the same climate, the same flora and fauna. Farmers are yet haying, the oats are in the shock, the buckwheat in bloom, the corn in the ear. A frost here 3 nights ago; on the 24 of June, a killing frost, forming ice.

We have crossed ranges 6000 feet high, and range after range of 3000 or 3500. The long thimble (Catskill) blackberries are abundant, but I do not touch them, nor any other berries, nor melons.

For 200 miles the roadsides have been lined with purple eupatorium, iron-weed, and, once, a great mass of monarda. The woods are of sugar maple, yellow birch, beech, spruce, and hemlock. The atmosphere of the woods is exactly that of our primitive Catskills; but I have not seen one chipmunk or woodchuck. But one new bird, the nonpareil, or painted bunting, with a call-note like our yellow-bird.

[1] *The Outlook*, 1921, and *Under the Maples*.

We have an ideal camp here — a level, grassy sugar-maple park, with a spring out of which flows a copious stream, with a big bathing-pool. 8 or 10 Virginia women and girls have just invaded our camp. All through Pa. and Maryland and W. Va., in every village where we paused, I met people who read my books — teachers, pupils, professional men, etc. Often I had more worshipers than Edison or Ford, but usually Ford is our greatest drawing-card. Ford is a wonder; he has developed greatly these few years. When one of our cars breaks down and no one can help us, Ford takes off his coat and does the job.

Shortly after his return, Mr. Burroughs sent the following letter to Mr. Edison:

I trust you reached home as safely as I did and find yourself all the better for the thorough shaking up, as I do. . . . I am aware that I whimpered and grumbled a good deal on the trip, but you must charge that to my age. I really had a wonderful time and got a large slice of our geography very vividly impressed upon my memory, to say nothing of the impression made upon some of my posterior muscles.

Much to my own surprise I feel like trying to write something about the trip. There is good literary stuff in it if one could set it forth in the right light. If I do write, be assured I will not print anything about you, or other members of the party, without first submitting it to you and to them.

I suppose I am still overeating; but if overeating enables a man to be youthful and active at 81 and ½, and to do his work nearly as well as ever he did, and to stand an auto trip from Orange to the Smoky Mountains, why, it cannot be a very bad thing. You must remember I eat very little concentrated food, like eggs, milk, and meat. Eggs poison me, and milk makes me bilious. I live mainly on the bulky foods, such as the cereals, vegetables and fruit. I drink water where you drink coffee and tea. My brain demands food as well as my body. If I am underfed, my capacity for intellectual work falls off. We are not all made on the same plan, and it is not safe to generalize in such matters from one's own experience. I come of a lean, hungry tribe — flat-bellied and 'raw-boned,' but active and industrious. I have lived longer than any man of my name that I have any knowledge of.

With many thanks for your part in giving me this great trip, and with the ardent hope that you may repeat it easily when you have joined the ranks of the octogenarians, I am

Your grateful and sincere friend.

And to Mr. Firestone:

. . . I did not quite cease grumbling and groaning till I got home. Well, you see allowances must be made for an octogenarian; he is an

old baby, and is entitled to a little indulgence on that score. No doubt I made myself disagreeable at times, but you will forget and forgive. I did get fearfully tired, but the few days here in this green, sweet solitude have salved all my wounds, and I am thinking so well of the trip that I may try to write something about it. . . .

What beauties and wonders we saw! what glory of mountain tops and what summer ripeness and repose in the broad river valleys! How such a trip enhances one's knowledge of and admiration for his own country! What an impression of the mass and magnitude of a single state it gives one! How much more than a mere geographic division will West Virginia henceforth mean to all of us! Yes, and the Great Smoky Mountains. Their smoke cannot blur the impressions they made.

I wish I had the trip up the Shenandoah Valley with you and Edison and Ford to look back to, but I really was not then in a condition to have enjoyed it.

I hope Harvey had a good time, and that he has forgotten all my sulkiness and ungraciousness. His skill in driving the car, and his patience and forbearance with me and my contrary moods, I shall never forget. Give him my love. He is a treasure, even with the cigarette habit. But this he will outgrow.

Your own serenity and good nature and spirit of helpfulness toward us all, has an abiding place in my memory. You nearly spoiled us with luxuries, but your intentions were of the best. . . .

Back among his own mountains he sighed contentedly, saying that mountains, as well as men, that did not smoke were good enough for him.

When Austria's message to the Entente came, he was so stirred he wrote one of the strongest of his war letters, and hurried it off to the Tribune. He rejoiced exceedingly at the speed with which President Wilson replied to Austria.

His Hubbard squashes were the pride of his eye. One night he got up at midnight and covered them with newspapers, then scolded in the morning because, after he had taken all that trouble, it did not freeze.

He writes as follows to Mr. Edison:

If you receive a suspicious looking box with excelsior sticking out of its joints, do not be alarmed. It is not an infernal machine to blow you up, unless you eat too much of the contents. It contains a Hubbard squash, grown here — the biggest old Mother Hubbard ever grew in her garden — perhaps. I'm quite sure Jersey can't produce such a squash. I had two like it on one vine, weighing 21 and 23 pounds. On a hill of four plants I had 115 pounds.

This squash was well fed and appears to have digested and assimilated all its food. I see on the under-side it looks as if some Hun

bacteria had got to work, so you better let your cook sample it very soon, or else perform a surgical operation upon it.

I also inclose four fall pippins which grew here on a tree, over 100 years old, beneath which you spread your table when you encamped here two years ago. I have great respect for a tree that can live so long and keep its fruit so young.

The Liberty Loan has been this way and was hospitably received, though the will to serve was better than the deed.

The Hun is where we have so long wanted to see him — begging for us to let up; but we will not till our heel is on his neck.

[Journal] October 8. The War absorbs all our thoughts — the Huns are getting it right and left, and are crying for peace. We will make peace with hell before we do with them. . . .

It was chiefly during the War that he was so free with his 'hells' and 'damns,' although it cannot be denied that all his life, when angered, he was given to extravagance in speech. It was the 'loud and harmless barking' that he confessed to getting from his father who, in reality, was, like him, 'chicken-hearted.' Seldom, if ever, did he show the trait of the Kellys, who, when angered, were 'apt to bite.'

[Journal] October 9. Began closing up the west-end of my porch today. Not writing this week. War news too exciting. Wilson is as great in diplomacy as Foch is in war. My hardest trial now is to wait from one newspaper till the next.

On the 13th he was much upset by the news that Germany would accept Wilson's terms, and was ready to evacuate to gain an armistice. 'God!' he cried, 'it would be a crime against the ages.' 'I can't believe the President will be caught in their trap.' Nevertheless, it made him furious to think of the possibility. When some one said, 'Let Foch answer them!' he echoed, 'Yes, by God! Let Foch answer them!' His reactions are further seen in his Journal for October 15th:

Exciting days — momentous War news. The Hun is breaking. Kaiserdom is doomed. The German empire is in the throes of Revolution. The day of reckoning has come. The cyclone of World War which the military power of Germany unloosed, and which they expected to ride and control, has got out of their hands, and they are now its victims. Germany will be impoverished in men and money for generations. The bills she must pay are staggering. President Wilson equal to the occasion — a man of the ages. The law of moral and intellectual gravitation seems to center the Allies' cause in him.

All spontaneously look to him to speak the right word, and he speaks it.

A few days before closing the Lodge he was stunned to learn that Pietro, the young, joyous, beauty-loving sculptor, who had worked and sung so gaily on those hills the previous summer, was dead and buried, a victim of pneumonia following the dread influenza. In the midst of busy days of apple-gathering and packing would come from time to time, with poignant reality, from first one, then the other, 'Pietro is dead!'

As usual, on the way down to Riverby, he visited the cemetery at Tongore.

[Journal.] The grave of my wife looks neglected — no grass, only weeds. She would not have neglected my grave, I am sure. Must go up and plant some sods from home.

On October 31st he comments convincingly:

Roosevelt criticizes Wilson severely. Yet here is the fact over all: We [the Allies] have won the War. Germany is beaten to her knees and is begging for mercy. That is what we set out to do, or help to do, and it is done. Two men in the world have contributed to that end more than any others — Foch and Wilson — one in the field, and the other in the councils of the nations. Wilson's lofty ideal of justice and international fair-play has been our guiding star; he stated our cause in terms of World Democracy, and his words have been an inspiration. In the field Foch has been his equal, and we [the Allies] have won the War.

The afternoon of November 7th, as Mr. Burroughs started out of the door at the Nest, he paused, and, returning, said, 'There's a great ringing of bells over in Hyde Park — what can it be?' Listening tremulously to the triumphant sound, we asked incredulously, 'Can it be Germany's surrender?' We motored to Kingston. At a garage they told us the War was over. Across the street were some boys with horns. Mr. Burroughs stood up in the car and called to them, 'Blow louder, boys! Make all the noise you can!' Then as we drove on, sobered, he murmured, 'Have I really lived to see the end of the War!' Kingston refused to be stirred. It was but a wild rumor, they declared. We motored home in a dubious state, yet confident that the certainty could not be far off.

[Journal] November 11. Woke up this morning at 5 to hear a faint confused din of bells and whistles in the direction of Poughkeepsie, heralding the end of the War. Got up and dressed and sat by the open fire till daylight. The mail at 6.15 am told the story. The Hun had capitulated. Glory to God! not to the Hun's God, but to the Christian God of the Allies. Go to Poughkeepsie in pm. Bedlam turned loose, such a racket! Everybody bent on making a discordant noise. Soon tire of it.

November 12. The medicine Germany has to take — has taken — is in the papers this morning. None too drastic. Criminals must be handcuffed. Germany must be kept handcuffed for generations. But what an ignoble figure is the Kaiser — fleeing to Holland, a fugitive from justice! Had he stayed and died with his cause, the world would have had some respect for him in the end. Not a drop of heroic blood in him. And his six sons, all unharmed during the whole war! They should all be turned over to the knife of the gelder and never allowed to perpetuate the Hohenzollern tribe. What do those German philosophers now think of the doctrine of the survival of the fittest? Who survives? The fittest, of course. And the nations and peoples that have some sense of justice and fair dealing, and mercy, and truthfulness survive in our times. In more primitive times might had its way, but now right, tempered by the Golden Rule, is bound to triumph. Moral values today have survival value; mere brute force must take a back seat. I should like to ask that renegade Englishman, Chamberlin, what he thinks about 'The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century' now. Are Teutonic frightfulness and shamefulness good foundations to build upon? I should like to ask E [Eucken?] if 'The Problems of Human Life' do not look a little different to him. I should like to ask Eucken if he does not get a glimpse of a new biological law that applies to the human species alone?

The Germans staked their all on the doctrine that might in the physical world, or brute world, makes right in the moral, human world, and they have failed. The War is over. Think of it! Chaos and famine may come to Europe, but the Hun is crushed. Great evils always follow in the footsteps of great good, but Time will restore the safe balance.

Afternoon: Every hour I have to nudge myself and say, 'Wake up! wake up! don't you know the War is ended?' It seems incredible that my life should go on just as before, but it does. I saw wood, doze before my open fire, read the paper, walk a little, ponder over Moulton's 'Introduction to Astronomy,' dream of the old days, receive callers, or sit vacant in my chair. And yet the most fervent and devout desire and hope of my life has suddenly come true! It is a relief — like that the early man must have felt when he saw an eclipse of the sun passing off. The world is at last freed from the grip

of this monster, and his claws are drawn. Not in this, or in any other generation, can he make another spring.

In a day or two he said at dinner:

I must examine further into Germany's claim of her great need for expansion, and see where it leads me. I can trust my instinct for the truth and justice. Darwin had that type of mind — he would often follow a clue that would seem to be leading him to confound all his theories, and often in the end it would prove to support them. His love of the truth was absolute. I can't compare myself to Darwin, but I do have the love of truth for truth's sake.

One evening as he sat by the fire he said contemplatively:

What an eventful period of the world I have lived in! In invention, in literature, in science, — the telephone, wireless, the aeroplane, the beginning of Darwinism. I have known Emerson and Whitman. I saw and heard Carlyle, and touched his hand. I knew Lincoln, and touched his hand. I lived through the Civil War, saw slavery crushed and disappear, though I did not take a hand in it. I hardly know why — probably because I was a non-fighting man and felt instinctively that my life would be more useful otherwise. Had I gone, I would probably have helped to fertilize the red soil of Virginia or Georgia. And now I have lived to see *this* War end! the heads of kings rolling in the dust, and the beginning of freedom and justice for all peoples of the earth. There will be a period of chaos — like the breaking up of ice in the river — but after a while it clears up — clears up.

Mr. Burroughs was not much given to making Christmas gifts, and was peculiarly averse to receiving them. On the day before Christmas he began growling a little as he unwrapped a small parcel. It contained two thin volumes of verse, ('Outdoors,' and 'Gods and Devils'), sent by the publishers, James T. White and Co. The poet's name, John Russell McCarthy, was new to him. He took the little volumes over to his Study, and when he returned in the evening, was as excited over them as was 'Brown Betty' over her tree. 'Read that, and that, and that,' he said, exultantly, tears of joy in his eyes as he listened to the reading. He did not sleep that night for happy excitement, and the next day wrote on the fly-leaf of the volume:

A remarkable book of verse — full of the highest order of poetry. It astonishes me. I had ceased to expect anything great from our young poets. I take it all back. Here once again is immortal poetry

— worth a thousand times all the New England poets, except Emerson, and rolling a higher, stronger anthem to the skies than he did. Again I am astonished and thrilled. Who is this new singer with Scotch or Irish name?

In a few days, pocketing the little books, he set out for the Shawangunk Mountains where, with friends, he read, and mused, and loitered in the winter woods, as the momentous year drew to its close.

[The narrative of the life is interrupted at this point for the characterizations which follow, and is resumed at Chapter XXXIV.]

CHAPTER XXXII

CHARACTERISTICS

Paint me as I am, mole and all.

OLIVER CROMWELL

My first impression of Mr. Burroughs was doubtless like that of most persons who met him — of his friendliness and sincerity. Easy-going, and unceremonious, he spoke with quiet candor and commonness. Though practical and definite in what he said and did, there was usually a delightful play of fancy running through his talk. It was a little surprising to see a man so obviously contemplative, so energetic and efficient when he did bestir himself. I found him both doer and dreamer. What he did was done without waste of effort, and when he dreamed, he was unashamed. He could fold his hands and wait, but if that for which he waited depended upon initial steps from him, he set about them briskly, then awaited results. His philosophy was like that of the old Arab — 'Tie your horse, *then* trust in Allah.' If it was for potatoes roasting in the ashes that he waited, his talk was not confined to potatoes — roaming far afield, in thought, he would remove those potatoes in the nick of time. He knew how to keep non-essentials in their place. Not that the proper cooking of a dinner was by any means a non-essential to him, quite the contrary; but he could trust to his subconscious to jog him at the proper time, and meanwhile consider many things in heaven and earth of which he knew, and some of which he only dreamed. He once said that his time-sense served him so well that he was practically independent of the clock, and did not carry a watch for several years, yet never missed train or ferry; and, what is more, was punctual to meals, the hours of which were but little less exacting than time-tables. To him, as well as to Mrs. Burroughs, at least in his advanced years, dinner was the one supreme event toward which all other doings moved. It must even be admitted that with them both, conversation was too often concerned (as Doctor Johnson said it should *not* be), with whether the mutton should be boiled or roasted.

As regards the definiteness of his movements, he never fumbled — except when doing something he disliked to do; and then one felt that Mrs. Burroughs was doubtless right in saying he fussed and bungled so that some one else would do it for him.

As sincerity is the dominant note in his work, so was it in his character. The same passion for truth revealed in his essays, his portraits of men, his hatred of shams, and his refusal to cheat himself with shadows, he revealed when discussing himself or his family. This, however, is not inconsistent with a certain reticence he felt constrained to observe in deference to the interests of others.

With ostentation of any kind, or with the tyranny of burdensome conventions, he had scant patience. How he disliked intricacies! Ever seeking to simplify life, he was actually unhappy in surroundings where ceremony and elaborate routine played a leading part. He would almost snap the head off a too obsequious waiter in a dining-car; and would say, on returning from a formal dinner, that he had felt like kicking the pompous butler out of the room. If *he* had dreamt that he dwelt in marble halls, it would have been a nightmare. Still he had a genuine liking for the flesh-pots of Egypt (if their contents were wholesome and digestible), though cherishing an almost unreasonable repugnance to the august bearers of the pots. This, however, was true only in cases where the number and ubiquity of servants typified pride of wealth and station in the master — a quiet, willing handmaid, a decent serving-man (one not too 'stuck up' to be met on friendly terms), — with such he quickly established cordial human relations.

Old clothes, old scenes, old paths, old friends, old books, held the firmest places in his regard. Hospitality and love of the chimney-corner, were strong in him. Still, he was not gregarious; he was what Doctor Johnson would have styled an unclubable man. Perhaps his need of others was less than in most persons. The close and sympathetic contact he had with natural objects had made him rely upon his own resources. It was himself and Nature, rather than himself and society, that most concerned him. Where others were sociable as a rule, he was so only in flashes. He had need of wide margins of silence and leisure to commune with Nature and with

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IN THE NEST AT RIVERBY

himself. Much given to reverie, he first received and absorbed what came to him, in turn ruminating, reflecting, and writing about it. As with all solitary writers, his work was done at double the pains, because of lack of stimulation from others.

Keenly conscious of his plasticity, and easily perturbed by others, when encroachment became too insistent, he escaped to the inner sanctuary of self. It is interesting to recall, in this connection, that a maternal great-grandmother, when angered or perturbed, did not stay and quarrel, but went into the bushes and sulked. A great-uncle, too, preferred to flock by himself; was doubtless actually anti-social. But when Mr. Burroughs made his retreat to the woods, it was not as a recluse; he simply needed solitude and provided for the need. When his fellows sought him out, he welcomed them; and when his mood so dictated, he sought them; for there were often times when he craved the friction of other minds, and the companionship of other hearts. In him were the seemingly opposed traits of one who loves solitude, yet thrives on companionship. He used to say he liked to mingle with others for a part of each day, but chafed under conditions which made him a prey to the continual presence of any one. Company exhilarated him; with congenial folk he became expansive, yet he easily tired of people. To be in a house with others, yet enough detached so he could but faintly hear their voices, and the ordinary bustle of household activities, was what he said he liked best. However, I believe he did his best work when absolutely detached from others; for when the bustling was not of the gentlest, he was disturbed. He did not well tolerate the necessary talk and activity in a household, either when trying to work, or when merely brooding and dreaming. For he was often most engaged when he seemed most idle, though chatterers could not realize this. Fortunately he had places of withdrawal, both at Riverby and at Roxbury; but on cold days, or when for any other reason he worked at the Nest or the Lodge, one could best help him by reducing household talk, movements, and sounds to a minimum.

'What *do* those women find to talk so much about?' he would ask. 'Do they never stop and think?' The multiplying of words annoyed him in either men or women. He sometimes said of a metropolitan friend: '—— is a good fellow; he

is very kind to me, but he's a worse chatterbox than any woman, and does tire me so; and when he parades his intimacy with Lord D——, he makes me sick to my stomach.'

For real companionship he required a certain mental kinship: 'I can't cross my thought,' he said, 'except with a closely allied species — can't mate right and left with every one.' Again, 'I like a man I can be silent with.'

Yet how tolerant he often was with the 'devastators of the day' (a phrase borrowed from Emerson), as he called many who came! When they came in the afternoon, he welcomed their coming, but equally welcomed their departure. When Mrs. Burroughs would hear him sigh after such visits, she would say with scant patience: 'But why are you so two-faced? *I* wouldn't have them chasing after me like that — I would send them about their business quick enough — it's your own fault.'

'But a man who gets a part of his living from the public,' he would reply, 'owes the public a certain duty — he cannot deny himself to them — at least I can't, though I do wish I had backbone enough to say "no" when they pile it on so thick.'

When persons interested him, his talk was brisk and animated; when they bored him, it was dull. He would let conversation lag, would act drowsy, sometimes really go to sleep; or, he would change the subject abruptly, asking a pertinent question that would stop the inconsequential chit-chat. Sometimes he would get up and walk away, pleading the necessity of fixing his Study fire, or going for the mail, or getting his wood for the evening; and if conditions were such that he could not withdraw bodily, he did in effect, at which time his visitors got little of his real self. However, to those he really *met*, the background of seriousness in his talk was ever enlivened by quiet humor. He loved fun, but was no maker of it. He loved to join in a good laugh, and would ask to have certain stories at his expense repeated, when his laughter would be the heartiest of any. His humor was of the gentle, lambent kind that made him a delightful every-day companion. The quick, witty turns of his speech, and the play of his fancy, robbed household life of much of the commonplace. Once, when some one protested against his looking over the spinach for dinner, and urged that he would not get out all the

grass and pigweed, he retorted, 'Who knows but the spinach would be all the better for a few *leaves of grass?*'

Although fun-loving, he could get no fun out of a joke at another's expense. He once wrote a friend concerning the playing of a practical joke:

> I never did anything of the sort in my life. It is hard for me to make believe, though I am capable of duplicity. To get the 'rigs' on anyone would hurt me more than it would him. I can't bear to make anyone feel awkward or embarrassed; but you get so much fun out of it all, for yourself and your victim, that I am sure I should like to be your victim.

During the last two years of his life, when he wearied even of dear friends, he would say, 'When the heart is sad, people tire one, whoever they are.' Certain long-winded correspondents bored him — those who assumed he was interested in all their doings, their petty triumphs, even their millinery. He would throw such a letter aside, saying, 'Oh, life is too short and sweet to wade through that'; or, 'That is too much of a muchness — I will let that answer itself.'

Aside from his correspondence in early manhood with E. M. Allen, and for forty years with Myron Benton, he had no real, sustained correspondence with men of his time, though he wrote casual letters to countless friends and acquaintances. The letters between him and Whitman were brief, and contained but little interchange of ideas. Those between him and Roosevelt dealt chiefly with natural-history questions; those with Dowden, Gilder, and Stedman were mostly on literary topics; and those to unknown friends were acknowledgments of appreciation, or answers to queries. With some friends he would correspond for a year or two with some regularity, then allow the correspondence to taper off, its cessation, however, being no sign of the dwindling of his friendship. During the past four years I have examined many hundreds of his letters kindly placed at my disposal by his friends or their representatives. For the most part they are brief and pithy, with a picture of the day or the season, a hint of his occupations, his especial interests and plans; often with mention of a forthcoming volume, or a recent essay. Good cheer prevails in them, as in his books.

He belonged to few organizations. One of the early mem-

bers of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, for a time at least he failed to take that body as seriously as do many of his *confrères*, confessing shame, however, that he could not bring himself to pull his own weight. 'I could never be capable of the disinterested work Gilder and Johnson give to such things,' he said. Once in a moment of complaisance he consented to serve as an Elector in the Hall of Fame, ever after to bemoan the acquiescence. Such work was not for him; nor was philanthropy his forte; nor team-work.

When confessing that he was deficient in neighborly pride, civic pride, even national pride, he said he made up somewhat in tribal or family affection. The reader of his stirring utterances during the World War, who saw how jealous he was that America should measure up to her highest ideals, would doubtless take issue with him as to his confessed limitations as a patriot. However, it was perhaps more as a human being than as an American, that he craved the triumph of ideals which should govern every nation to-day.

His aloofness from organizations may, aside from reasons already named, have been due to his having marked out a course for himself in early manhood which accorded with his own aims and temperament, and which precluded participation in other paths. He once wrote a friend:

> Your life shines beside mine like gold beside copper. What a capacity for friendship you have, and for getting at the best there is in people! I shrink from what your judgment of me must be at times. Mine has been a selfish life — mainly because it has been hard for me to do things I do not enjoy doing.

He might with truth have added, 'And because I felt constrained to do the things I have done'; for he regarded his gift as a writer as something for which he must render a strict account; though, because he liked to write, he was prone to look upon it as a kind of self-indulgence.

Always his admission of faults and weaknesses took much of the 'curse' from them. He was above pretension to virtues or capacities he did not have.

Loving humanity in the concrete, his friends were many and intimate, and each had his own niche. After a quarter of a century of friendship with him, Whitman said, 'John is one of the true hearts — warm, sure, firm.' Of himself Mr. Bur-

roughs once wrote, 'I am faithful in friendship, but fickle in love.' His old comrade Mr. Aaron Johns wrote after his passing, 'Heaven has given me but few more grateful memories than of our companionship and affection.'

His comradeship was confined chiefly to men, while his friendships were with both men and women. The sense of companionship which he felt with certain men was, in only a few instances, experienced with women friends. Love of comrades began in early boyhood; one of his earliest remembered griefs was his bereft feeling when the visit of a boy cousin came to an end. Probably the dearest comrade he ever had, whose loss he mourned all his days, was his nephew Channy B. Deyo. Comrades through maturer years were E. M. Allen, Myron Benton, Aaron Johns, Walt Whitman, and Dr. Frank Baker. During the last three years of his life he formed a deep attachment to the young poet Mr. John Russell McCarthy, first attracted by his poetry, later by a deep congeniality. 'He is the dearest man friend who has come to me since Channy B. was taken,' he said fervently.

In trying to account for the fact that his warmest, most appreciative readers and friends were usually among women, he cited certain feminine traits in himself, such as impressionability and hypersensitiveness, and said frankly: 'I am often more unreasonable and whimsical than any woman. Yet I do not see that I have any of the special feminine weaknesses — I am not gossipy, nor loquacious, nor given to trifles. I have no more than my share of vanity — have I? — and I am probably too indifferent to dress.' Granting the traits to which he confessed, nevertheless, the cast of his mind was distinctly masculine — his intellectual grasp, his sane, fair-minded judgment, his ability to see things whole. Perhaps the seemingly contradictory traits are best explained by a statement of Mr. Havelock Ellis — that every person of genius is, in some degree, at once man, woman, and child. Conspicuous feminine traits in Mr. Burroughs, other than those he mentioned, were intuition, gentleness, and protectiveness toward wild things — toward all living things, in fact, except woodchucks and other vermin.

Any one who has seen him disclose a bird's nest in the grass must have noted the brooding gesture with which he made one a sharer in the pretty secret; and the way his hand would

curve over an injured or a dead bird showed the same exquisite tenderness one sees in the hand of the Christ Child in Raphael's Madonna of the Bird. His manner of proffering a wild flower was once thus described by a friend: 'He relinquishes it with a look so tender, you regret the glance is not for you, but for the flower.' Just to hear him imitate the baby talk of the goldfinches to each other was to glimpse his sympathy with the wild life around him. Again, 'There they go, my cedar-birds, two by two, the most faithful, the most silent of birds — I'd like to know what they get for their young.' Or, 'I called on my junco this morning — her little beady eyes shone from out the mossy bank — I am afraid the cows will step on her nest.' As to the child in him, he retained the simple, direct, unspoiled quality, despite all the adulation received; while the curiosity and wonder with which he looked out upon life never flagged. He delighted in concrete things; kept his love of adventure, and the child's ability to escape from the humdrum into the realm of fancy. He kept, too, the 'wild joy of living' far beyond the age when most others find life but a drab affair. One of the faculty of Vassar College, a long-time friend, wrote soon after his passing: 'That spirit of youth never seemed to fail him. He was the wind blowing from high hills along clear-flowing streams.'

Whatever the explanation, it is certain that from late middle life onward his friendships with women predominated — women who faced life from a center within themselves; self-balanced women whose sympathy and intelligence made friendship (and in a few instances, *camaraderie*) between him and them peculiarly satisfying. Among such in early manhood were Elizabeth Akers Allen, Sarah Adams, Sarah C. Allaben, Mary Hallock Foote, Emma Lazarus, Anne Gilchrist. In later years, to name a few: Mary E. Burt, Mary Mapes Dodge, Sarah K. Taylor, Ida M. Tarbell, Winifred Robinson, Caroline Childs, Elizabeth Custer, Candace Wheeler.

In his relations with young women, school-girls, and children, there was a half-tender, half-playful sentiment, peculiarly engaging, but so catholic that each knew she was but one of many. Like the flowers and the birds, he loved them all, some for one gift or grace, others for others, though when addressing each he saw her with an eye single to her own glory. His venerable appearance, his fame as an author, his playful-

ness, lent a piquancy to friendships which had so much of the filial, or the fraternal. Many were his harmless flirtations with bright laughing girls, — his adopted granddaughters, daughters, sisters, and sweethearts.

It was so easy for him to give a pretty turn to his sentences when writing to his young friends, while his spontaneity and genuineness precluded mere gallantry. The fanciful names he found for each gave a touch of romance: Golden Gate, Mexico, Ohio, Tacoma, Ampersand, Atlanta, Child of the Drumlins, Sanguinaria, Blue Eyes, Raven's Plume, Gypsy, Gentian, Woodsie, Bluebird, June, Chinquapin, Viola Blanda, Clover, Miss Efficiency. Some of his names for children were: Chickadee, Kinglet, Silver Birch, Tanager, Chipmunk, Little Brown Creeper, Brown Betty, Jenny Wren, Golden Bantam.

To one young friend he wrote: 'I like the bird in you. You are so aerial — I am afraid you will soar away some fine day.' This correspondent recently wrote understandingly, 'He was so chummy, — so jokey; . . . he only meant half he said.'

Of his own love of approbation he used to say that it amounted to a weakness. It is doubtless true, as Mr. R. U. Johnson has said (with a twinkle in his eye?), that Mr. Burroughs had in his later years 'as much appreciation as he could digest'; and yet appreciation which found too explicit expression always annoyed him.

'I feel awkward and unworthy,' he used to say, 'when they spread it on so thick.' A curious contradiction — highly valuing appreciation, yet restive under expressed praise! When women, approaching him with glistening eyes, told him with unsteady voices how much 'Waiting' had been to them, he would blush uncomfortably. He knew their gratitude was genuine; why so embarrassed? Perhaps from an excess of humility, mingled with undue sensitiveness to both praise and blame; perhaps, too, a certain unsophistication which made response to such approaches difficult.

'I almost wish I had never written the poem,' he once said, — 'they pester me so about it.' This was, of course, but the transitory irritation of an impulsive nature which, when under emotional stress, allowed itself great latitude of speech. Such comments were usually called out by the multitudinous requests for autograph copies of the poem. If a particularly bold attack was made, as when, for example, one person asked for

three copies, he would say, 'Tell her to fold her hands and wait till the spirit moves me to grant her modest request.'

As a matter of fact, he was grateful that the poem had proved a solace to so many, and was often deeply moved at hearing of special instances, sometimes saying, humbly, 'I builded better than I knew when I wrote it.' Once when commenting upon some fresh demonstration of homage, he wrote: 'It is curious how, when the tide of praise sets toward one, all his acquaintances want to join in and swell it. If it set the other way, how quickly the most of them would join in that too!'

Once in New York, Dr. Merle St. Croix Wright, not knowing that Mr. Burroughs was in the congregation, made some appreciative reference to his writings. 'I felt as mean as if I had robbed a bird's nest,' he said. Once, too, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, during an illustrated lecture on birds, when suddenly confronted by a life-size picture of himself thrown upon the screen, he wriggled as uneasily as when, a boy, he had broken in a new flax-made shirt. However, experiences during the later years inured him to such ordeals, so that he came to sit with equanimity and see himself as the cameras had seen him. As a rule, he was peculiarly unselfconscious when facing a camera. In fact, when callers with a camera were too shy to ask permission, he would say, 'Girls, do you want to take my picture?' and when rallied about this would rejoin: 'I knew they did, but dreaded to ask. Why shouldn't I give them pleasure?' Not vanity, as some might infer, but true kindliness prompted such complaisance.

His humility was not associated with any underrating of self. He understood his own strength and weakness, and could justly appraise both. If wanting in pride of person, he had a full measure of pride of intellect, and recognized his native gifts, and his attainments, without regarding them in any sense as meritorious. He had simply followed his own bent and tried to give an honest account of his talents.

'I always feel a little sheepish,' he wrote a friend (M. B. C.), 'when I am much praised. I know how poor the books are. To tell the truth, I like an honest adverse criticism — I may learn something from that. It doesn't hurt a bit if it is sincere, and shows any insight.' When in 1910 an able estimate of him appeared in one of the leading magazines, he was much

concerned because the writer had lauded him at the expense of Thoreau, and wrote: 'I am not worthy to tie Thoreau's shoes and —— knows it, or he ought to. It is more painful to me to be unjustly praised then unjustly blamed.' Of an article about him in 1915 ('John Burroughs, Neighbor'), he said: 'It gives me as much pleasure to have the right word spoken, as it gives me pain to be wrongly or loosely praised. Mabie has spoken the right word here — emphasized the things worthy of emphasis.'

When, in 1916, the American Institute of Arts and Letters awarded him a gold medal for his work as an essayist and in *belles-lettres*, he was much taken aback. 'They should have given it to some one else — Brownell, Paul Elmer More, or some of those academic chaps — instead of to a rustic like me. I can imagine those men who have really earned it wondering why I should have it. "It doesn't belong to him," I can hear them say, "— an old fellow who writes about birds and chipmunks."'

Likewise, as to other untenable claims for him: 'When I hear myself called a great naturalist, I think with shame, "What would naturalists like Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall — or Professor Osborn, say?"'

Surveying his life, one has a vicarious satisfaction to see how he triumphed over conditions that would have seriously hindered one of less well-defined aims. To mould life to one's desires is surely one of the qualities of genius. To relegate hampering conditions to a minor place, and extract from the common things about one the daily manna of contentment, sometimes even the elixir of joy, is not that a gift of the gods? It was chiefly his ability to find happiness in the recurring seasons that made him say he had had a joyous life. The paths he had traversed hundreds of times attracted him the more on that very account. Never would he have subscribed to Shenstone's lament:

> 'Tedious again to mark the drizzling day,
> Again to trace the same sad tracks of snow;
> Or, lulled by vernal airs, again survey
> The self-same hawthorne bud and cowslip blow.'

His Journal shows that with each April he was born anew, and traced each spring token with a fresh delight. The 'same sad tracks of snow' challenged, not wearied, him; and instead

of a melancholy strain, evoked the crisp, invigorating 'Snow-Walkers.' What delight he had in the brown earth, naked trees, ploughed fields, skunk-cabbage, even the skunk itself — not merely the beautiful things, but 'the stupendous whole'! Years ago, while walking along a country road shortly after his return from Jamaica, he waved toward some mounds of fertilizer in the fields and said, 'How good those manure-piles look to me!' as enthusiastically as he would have said, 'How dear and tender is that bluebird's note!' Both were associated with farm life at the Old Home. Besides, to the poetic soul,

> 'In the mud and scum of things
> There alway, alway something sings.'

How truly John Burroughs invested himself in this world, how insatiable he was of its beauties and wonders and delights, his reader well knows; while those who knew him personally were readily impressed with his serene and unfailing content with the universe as he found it. None but one happy in the heart of him could write as did he, when past his seventieth year:

> I have had a happy life. . . . I think I was born under happy stars, with a keen sense of wonder, which has never left me, and which only becomes jaded a little now and then, and with no exaggerated notion of my own deserts. I have shared the common lot, and have found it good enough for me. Unlucky is the man who is born with great expectations, and who finds nothing in life quite up to the mark.
>
> . . . I would gladly chant a pæan for the world as I find it. What a mighty interesting place to live in! If I had my life to live over again, and had my choice of celestial abodes, I am sure I should take this planet, and I should choose these men and women for my friends and companions.[1]

Perhaps compassion was the trait of all others that most endeared Mr. Burroughs to his friends. It went out to the wild creatures as well as to his kind. A friend who knew him for many years recently wrote me this about him: 'I have often seen him turn out of his path to avoid breaking a spider's web. "It is hard for them to make their webs," he said, "and I hate to spoil them."'

Once at Woodchuck Lodge when his little grandson had wrought mischief that might easily have called forth severe

[1] From *Leaf and Tendril.*

reproof, he merely said in a sad, chiding tone, 'Oh, laddie, laddie — see what you have done!'

One winter evening in New York, as he was briskly preceding me up the steps to an elevated station, a strange young woman accosted him, speaking confidentially, as she laid a detaining hand upon his arm. I shall never forget the tone in which he answered her — kindly, if a bit expostulatingly, 'Oh, go home, you naughty girl, go home!' the last two words almost pleadingly. Afterwards he said regretfully, 'Perhaps I ought to have given her something — who knows but she was hungry!'

With other imaginative men of active intellects, he shared a difficulty in making decisions; but when once he did decide, was resolute enough, and, where convictions were enlisted, was certain with an invincible certainty.

He had the susceptibility, and perhaps some of the vanity, that is said to be the besetting defect of the literary person. He presented a combination of serenity and its opposite; was easily irritated and angered, again was patient and forbearing to a degree. In truth, he was a bundle of contradictions: ardor and unconcern, tranquillity and anxiety, forbearance and impatience, deliberation and impulse, humility and proper self-valuation, optimism and pessimism. His naturalness and simplicity may easily be made too much of. That he had many naïve qualities is no truer than that there was a certain subtlety in his character. Simplicity in life, in literature, in art — the natural, the spontaneous — these he prized. Involved sentences, the overwrought, the artificial, he detested in literature, as he detested their counterparts in life. Wherever he brought his intellect to bear, he was simple and sincere; but in conduct he was not always so straightforward. He once confessed: 'I could always practice duplicity in self-defense; and I have many times lied out and out to save a row — in innocent matters, such as helping Hiram, where the truth should have been welcomed.'

There were many cross-currents in his stream of life, and sometimes he was carried along for a time with first one, then another. It is doubtless true that the lack of heroic fiber, which he candidly admitted, sometimes kept him from doing what would, in the end, have been better for himself and others. 'I know when I am with the ——'s, I am not sincere,' he said on

a certain occasion. 'I appear to agree to what they say, when I do not agree. It is despicable of me, I know — it is my weakness.' Despite this weakness, which was the defect of certain admirable qualities, he was essentially sincere; essentially honest-minded; true to his ideals, and faithful in his affections. In money matters, and in all questions of fair-dealing, he was punctilious. If he inclosed a letter in a magazine, or a parcel, he would put on the postage, the same as though mailing it separately. If a conductor in a crowded car neglected to take up his fare, he would thrust it upon him, even at the risk of falling off the car in dismounting. He once wrote:

> It always hurts me to triumph over people to their faces; and I never could cheat at games, nor take advantage in anything. It hurts me even to beat a man in argument, yet, with my pen, see how I could hurt poor ——! This is one form of my cowardice.

Clearly, consistency was not one of the jewels he particularly guarded. It took me some time to get used to his anger at 'the utter perversity of inanimate things.' Such exhibitions were so contrary to one's preconceived opinion of the author of 'Waiting.' Then, too, his fretting about the weather seemed so out of character with one who claimed to accept the world as it was, and to find good in everything. After listening to his two-thirds fretful and one-third humorous railing about the weather-gods, if one asked, 'Why not use your philosophy about it?' he would reply, irritably: 'I haven't any philosophy when it comes to the weather. I used to look at Amasa there at Slabsides, poor devil! When the rain and the blight came, he was much more of a philosopher than I was. He would say, "Well, it can't be helped," and buckle down harder than ever; but I am damning the laws of force and motion most of the time.' Again: 'Yes, I know — but the concrete man isn't a philosopher. I'm a philosopher in the abstract, but a growler in the concrete.' And in the weeks that followed, during the persistent cold and rain, his lamentations and denunciations would be particularly severe. The frequent calls of the cuckoo one summer got on his nerves so that he was half ready to believe that the lugubrious bird really foretold rain. As the bird's call would drift down from the red-thorns on 'Scotland,' he would exclaim: 'Just hear that pesky bird! Is there *never* going to be any summer? At this rate corn will never grow.'

Then when the heat would come in double measure, he would as whimsically complain, 'Now it's so hot the corn will grow so big we can't eat it.' Still, in other moods, he would say contentedly: 'What weather this is for corn! I could fairly hear it laugh in its sleeve this morning at the sizzling heat.'

In obeying his injunctions, 'Put in my faults, C. B. — you know them,' one is moved to say, as Carlyle said of the shortcomings of Edward Irving, 'This was the alloy of the man, and you have to be thankful for the abundant gold along with it.' It is happily true that they who knew him best loved him most.

Until we are rid of the notion that he was, as an acquaintance said of him, 'almost apostolic,' we cannot know the real Burroughs. True he had a patriarchal look, accentuated by his white hair and beard, and he was gentle and kind, and loved beauty and his fellow-men; but he was not an apostle, nor a saint, nor anything of the sort. He did not assume to teach, nor to guide others; the little birds did not hover about his head, nor eat out of his hand; nor did any of the wild animals reverse their natures and show unusual traits in his presence. On this point is a bit of his own testimony from a letter quoted in the Roxbury Times in 1907, in which he tells of picking up, in the open fields, two full-grown flycatchers, in full possession of their wings, without having put salt on their tails. He tells also of having done the same thing two seasons before, with two bluebirds, then adds:

> Now it would be easy for me to get affidavits from respectable people that I possess some strange power over birds which enables me to put my hands upon them anywhere in the fields or woods. I have witnesses to both these incidents. They saw the birds in my hands, they heard my story, and they know I have the reputation for telling the truth . . . but if you could cross-examine the deponents, you could probably make the affidavits collapse.
>
> The fact is that in both cases the birds were fighting on the ground, and were so absorbed with each other that they allowed me to come up and cover them with my hat. So my strange power over birds vanishes into thin air!

1. The Wistful Celt

The dominant note in the temperament of John Burroughs was retrospection. His persistent yearning for his lost youth, and his childhood home amounted to an actual nostalgia — a

homesickness which home could not cure. Anything which called up the past sent a mournful thrill through his soul. His 'Spell of the Past,' the saddest thing he has written, leaves one with an ache in the throat, and eyes full of unshed tears. Something of the same feeling is evoked by this passage from the Journal:

> How the days accumulate behind us and turn their beautiful sad faces toward us. Here we stand upon the marge of time, with all that growing pack back of us, like a fair land, idealized by distance, into which we may not enter, or to which we may not return. The future is unknown to us, in fact, does not exist, but the past is a part of ourselves. The days are our children which we have for a little time and then they are taken from us. One by one they step across the line into that land from which there is no returning, and not till they are gone do we see how beautiful or pathetic they were, and how deeply we loved them.

Here is the true Celt who, seeing a thing, or even imagining it, ever after possesses it; forever it dwells in those recesses of his soul where lies romance. The Celt, with clouds of glory trailing after him, and moving before him, and always leaving him midway! Well that he can never reach the rainbow's end — if he could, he would needs sigh that he could no longer sigh for the Unattainable. Poor Celt! do we smile at you? Perhaps it is only that we shall not weep instead.

Mr. Burroughs was pretty evenly balanced between interests in the world without and within. He could turn and look in upon himself with the scrutiny of the trained observer, so that his very introspection was objective. Having so invested himself in nature as to become almost the object he looked upon, these became symbols of himself — of his lost youth. No wonder, then, that his joy in the recurring seasons and their gifts was three-parts pain. The day was nearing when he could be identified with them no more: spring and the birds would come again and again, but he was passing. This wistful retrospection began in middle life. The marvel is that so little of it crept into his books; but in the Journal often and often he sits in the gloaming of a pensive memory. He admits the habit to be 'almost a disease.'

Like an unfulfilled wish in the subconscious, the vision of his lost youth hovered about him, having what psychologists call over-valuation. This might by some be interpreted as his

way of avoiding the battles of his own soul. One critic *has* said that it was the expression of an unfulfilled longing for spiritual attainment. It is not a thing to dogmatize about, and one assuming to appraise it needs to weigh nicely not only the many evidences of self-conquest and attainment which his life reveals, but his brooding temperament as well, — that heritage from Welsh and Irish forbears.

We have seen that he was not a fighter. He did not always struggle for 'the treasure difficult to attain'; but he did work steadily and faithfully to compass clearness, truth, and excellence in his art. To have attained honesty, sobriety, industry, adherence to truth and beauty; to have yielded reverence to things worthy of reverence; to have dealt fairly with one's fellow-men, and won their love — are not these steps in self-conquest? have they no spiritual value?

Closely allied to his longing for the Past was that for home and family. From these he never became emancipated. In one of his recorded dreams he saw Carlyle as a little boy, and *then regretted Carlyle's lost youth!* Especially significant, this, in that he and Carlyle were so akin in their strong local and filial attachments. In his dream, Carlyle was doubtless the surrogate of himself.

In the early nineteen hundreds he said in a letter:

> The editors of a magazine called VIM have just been examining my head phrenologically. They say I have the greatest development of philoprogenitiveness, and those faculties that give sympathy and love, on record.

A passage from one of his books is, in this connection, apropos:

> I have missed certain domestic good fortunes, such as a family of many children (I have only one), which might have made the struggle of life harder, but which would surely have brought its compensations. Those lives are, indeed, narrow and confined which are not blessed with several children. Every branch the tree puts out lays it open more to the storms and tempests of life; it lays it open also to the light and the sunshine, and to the singing and mating birds. A childless life is a tree without branches.[1]

He himself was one of ten children; his parents were members of large families, and most of his brothers and sisters had

[1] *The Summit of the Years.*

large families, while, as he said, he had but one child. He always rejoiced when he heard of the birth of a child to any of his friends, and exhorted them to let the good work go on. He was disappointed that his grandchildren numbered only three. During the years that his brother Hiram was with him at Slabsides, his strong parental feeling had a vicarious outlet. Sheltering and cooking for the homeless one greatly appeased his heart-hunger; and the nearness of his son and grandchildren relieved it still more. It may be remembered that he struggled vainly with his innate yearning when his son went to college, and suffered far too acutely at the end of each vacation; and that during the years when his son lived but a mile distant from Riverby, he but poorly endured the stretching of the cord that far; while any plan of Julian's that looked toward going farther from home was painful in the extreme to his father.

Doubtless if he had had more effective outlets through early manhood and middle life, — more of the sympathy and appreciation that came so abundantly in later years, — this centering upon his childhood home and kindred, and upon the Past, would have been much less pronounced. More of the driving force of his nature would have found forward-flowing channels, thus preventing that reflux upon itself in which his soul forever sought to retrace the path along which it had come,

> 'with longings unappeased, and tears
> Drawn from the very source of life.'

What bearing had these deep-seated needs, and their meager discharge into natural channels, upon his career? Little if any crippling effect is seen in his intellectual life. Upon reality he kept a firm hold; he wrested strength from weakness; and steadfastly applied himself to the work which he had mapped out in youth. The most of his creative urge was diverted into his art; much overflowed to the birds and the animals (especially to his dogs), and much to his fellows. There was but little abatement of creative energy up to almost the close of life. The unstinted love he had invested in living things came unstintedly back to him, thus was that prophetic line of his early manhood fulfilled:

> And what is mine shall know my face.

Through the homing instinct, then, this Child of Nature found his way back to the primal source of life. From the bosom of the Great Mother he drew his sustenance, and, never outgrowing the child's need for guidance, by keeping firm hold of her hand, he also led others back to Nature.

2. Tenement and Tenant

In studying the personality of John Burroughs, one finds the interaction between mind and body unusually close, responsiveness to stimuli unusually ready. Of the importance of the body he himself has this to say in 'Whitman: A Study':

> It may be true that the thing a man is least likely to forget is that he is an animal; what he is most likely to forget is that the animal is just as sacred and important as any other part; indeed, that it is the basis of all, and that a sane and healthful and powerful spirituality and intellectuality can only flow out of a sane and healthful animality.

Only another way of stating with Browning,

> '... nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul.'

Unquestionably, knowledge of one's physiology augments that of his psychology. To the biographer no trifling trait is negligible. Constitutional bias, bodily ills, idiosyncrasies, all are significant. Battles have been lost because of inborn peculiarities of generals. Who was it that once abandoned an engagement and put back to land because of seasickness? Mr. Burroughs himself was on the eve of enlisting in the Civil War when deterred by a carbuncle, after which more hindering causes arose. In one of his letters to his wife, in early manhood, is seen his understanding of the close relation his mind sustained to his body:

> Take from me my delight in reading and writing, and my love for the earth and sky, *and any part of my health* [italics mine], and I should be the most miserable of mortals.

In middle age, when commenting upon his good health, he said in his Journal, 'And out of this superb condition I wrote my Rain piece.' Fortunately, throughout his long life he had comparatively little illness or pain; for, as he wrote a friend in the nineteen-hundreds: 'I never could have done anything worth anybody's reading, if I had had to do it suffering as you

do from incessant pain. Gad! what courage!' He marveled at the work done by Richard Jefferies, Sidney Lanier, and Stevenson, hampered as they were by ill-health. The least film over his mind prevented his work. If he wrote when suffering from poor sleep, indigestion, palpitation, faulty elimination, anger or anxiety, he was likely the next day to throw those pages into the waste-basket. His mind, he said, was like a flame that depended upon the good combustion going on in his body. The moderation with which he worked was a part of his make-up. He never stuck to a thing just to finish it; when wearied he got up and did something else. 'If I work when tired,' he cautioned me, 'my reader soon tires when he reads it'; and he often asserted, 'I shall never die of overwork.' Quite different is this from laziness. Moreover, his loitering with Nature, however delightful as a pastime, was the basis of his work; and when he did work at his craft, it was always painstakingly, and under far more hampering conditions than the world will ever know.

Undoubtedly from his generous sensuous endowment grew the distinguishing character of his work. His senses were always on duty; his impressions never blurred. He saw, heard, smelled, tasted, felt, more quickly and keenly than most persons. His reader hardly needs to be reminded of that 'eye, practiced as a blind man's touch,' nor of his 'inevitable ear,' nor of 'the watchful heart.' His keen senses contributed not only to his feeling for reality, but to his feeling for ideality as well. So vividly could he bring up images, he could fairly touch them. 'Sometimes I wear it [an image] out looking at it so much,' he would say. All his life, at will, he could bring up his mother's face, and the faces of others he deeply loved, — a physical reminiscence. He often saw his mother stooping in the upland meadows gathering strawberries; and saw Hiram, the countryman, in the streets of Washington, carrying his new gun upon his shoulder. 'I can see the queer figure he cut now,' he said, 'as plainly as I see you.' Through this gift, so highly developed, he experienced afresh the scenes in nature, while, through his gift of expression, he made his reader experience them.

Motion, sound, form, color (possibly color a little less), seemed to attract him about equally. Once, when strawberrying, he came toward me guarding something in his

berry-stained palm. 'See this little Greek vase I have found!' It was a tiny, exquisitely moulded gray amphora, no larger than a small pea, which had been made out of earth by some tiny creature. He had spied it as it fell from a blade of grass. Probably his 'Strawberries,' and his essay on the apple, are so appetizing, so redolent with color, form, fragrance, and flavor because his own apprehension of these qualities was so vivid and discriminating.

Once on a September walk with him, in his later years, when, from the road, he caught sight of a mud-dauber's nest on the under side of a rock, some little distance away, I marveled:

'How did you ever spy that? You certainly have eyes!'

'Yes,' he rejoined, 'when you write your book, that is one claim you *can* make for me — I am a natural observer.' Then, breaking off some of the mass with his knife, he exposed the groove with the grub in it, and the spiders stored there for food. 'Now Fabre,' said he, 'could tell us most interesting things about this — the Peckhams have in their book. There's a whole volume in the mud-daub on that stone.'

Sometimes a natural-history observation served merely as a thread upon which to string philosophical speculations. One July day (1917) he sat a long time on a rock in a pasture contemplating a wild strawberry vine struggling across the rock, and on return to the hay-barn began writing of the behavior of the vine, but was soon deep in the discussion of the soul's immortality — man's aspirations, and the plant's, both a part of manifold nature, suggesting the theme and leading him by easy stages from observations close at hand to speculations as to the hereafter. Later, when bringing the sheets for typing, he said: 'Why am I so interested to try to prove that I have no immortal soul? I suppose because I do not want to feed my mind upon shadows.'

A few examples culled from the Journal illustrate his 'inevitable ear.' In the silence of the November woods, while watching a weasel, he enumerates the sounds he hears — the dry leaves dropping from the oaks, the occasional fall of an acorn (which 'makes quite a racket'), the filing of the pignuts by the red squirrels. When standing in the March twilight on the lawn, he notes the faint rustle in the dry grass made by the earthworms coming up out of their burrows. Somewhere he

speaks of hearing the stems of the ash leaves falling, the leaves having previously let go.

His sensitiveness to sounds other than those in nature, was somewhat of a hindrance. Noises in the city, the roar of trains, the whistle of steamboats — rackets of all kinds — were poorly borne. Persons with harsh or rasping voices made him cringe. All blatant sounds pained him. He liked band-music, but wanted it at a distance, and piano-playing, as a rule, was a torture. 'Every note pounds on my ear — ugh!' The violin, and all stringed instruments, he loved. Some of the great operatic music stirred him deeply, but ballads touched his heart. 'You can do anything with me,' I once heard him say, 'when I am softened by music.'

He had endured the sound of the typewriter for years without complaint, but when a noiseless one was installed, said contentedly, 'This downy-footed friend is a treasure — noiseless as the flight of an owl.'

He loved to smell things — newly cut wood, new-mown hay, blooming buckwheat and corn, and the maple buds in early spring. Of an April day he wrote in his Journal:

> A cool south wind with streaks of pungent vegetable odor. When I smell too determinedly for it, I miss it, but when I let my nose have its own way and take in the air slowly, I get it — an odor as of myriad swelling buds.

Even rank odors, such as skunk-cabbage, and, when not too near, the skunk itself, were welcome. Tansy he liked for its associations, and seldom walked past a clump of it without plucking a leaf, crushing it, the better to smell it, then poking it in one of his nostrils, whence it comically protruded as he continued his walk. 'Did you ever notice how sweet with honey the bee is?' he would ask, handing me a dead bee. He was ever on the watch to add to his list of flowers not generally considered fragrant, but which do have this quality; and he liked to catch at the auspicious moment those flowers in which fragrance is evanescent — hepaticas, dicentras, spice-bush, sugar maple, witch-hazel. I recall his delight one day when blackberrying on the mountain, to find a white aster with a fragrance like milkweed.

A walk that yielded him a new fact in nature was especially marked in his calendar. The day he found the climbing

fumitory growing on Old Clump was one such. It grew in abundance around Slabsides, but to come upon it for the first time upon his native hills was like coming upon a friend in an unexpected place.

In 'Fresh Fields' he tells of smelling the peat smoke when far off the shore of Ireland; and says that, on coming from London to New York, when abreast of New England, and still many miles out to sea, he distinctly smelt land — 'a subtle, delicious odor.'

What a discordant sound was to his ear, were certain odors to his nose — the smell of gasoline, especially from another man's car, and the clouds of dust that assailed his nostrils, and tobacco. Certain friends, 'always reeking with tobacco,' put his tolerance to a severe test. Like Bryant, he never meddled with tobacco, except to quarrel with its use. 'Smokers are the most selfish beings that exist,' he would say; 'they have no compunctions about polluting the air the rest of us have to breathe.'

In matters of taste he was most discriminating. He complained that few country women cook vegetables so as to preserve their flavor. It was a distinct acquisition when, on a visit to the Garlands, he learned from Mrs. Garland how delicate is the flavor, and how digestible is cabbage, if cooked only ten or fifteen minutes.

He confessed that he was 'always too good a feeder,' and had been 'inclined to gluttony in youth.' 'I could eat more honey as a boy of nine or ten than any boy I ever knew, and had a sweet tooth for "lock-jaw," and pies and cake. Gad! what quantities of pie we put into our stomachs! and the apples and cherries and all the wild fruits! and sweet curds! I've told you how I gormandized on that, so I couldn't look at it for months to come. Then the coffee debauches Aaron and I had in camping, and the trout we ate! It was an insane way to live — but, mercy! wan't those trout good? What sweet, delicious things they were!'

Up to his sixtieth year careless as to diet, after that he became increasingly careful. Commenting on the ailments growing out of early indiscretions, he said, 'I had been a great sinner without knowing it, and the divinities which should rule below stairs, as above, in one's house of life, became transformed into furies.' Hence he grew abstemious, except

at the midday meal, at which, as a rule, he still ate rather too heartily. His refusal to dine in the evening, except rarely, was doubtless salutary, though it cut him off from much of the convivial side of life.

I recall a few illustrations of the delicacy of his sense of touch: his comment as to the smoothness of the water in the Catskills; his sensuous delight in a skin bath in a mountain stream; the 'delicious feel of a child's skin'; his susceptibility to certain textiles; his pleasure, or the reverse, in shaking hands with certain persons — the flabbiness, coldness, and moisture of some hands, the firm texture, warmth, and cordiality of others. He judged the quality of a person to a great extent by his physiology. Of a certain acquaintance he said, 'She is coarse in hair, and skin, and voice — there is something flaunting about her — like a black-eyed Susan.' He always emphasized the fineness of Whitman's organization — the pinkness of his skin, the softness of his hair, the delicacy of his external ear, the symmetry of his frame. Once he surprised a friend whose extreme sensitiveness was being commented upon by saying, 'You can't help it — with that tip of your nose.'

'Why, what about the tip of my nose?' she inquired, mystified.

'Don't you know your own nose?' he said. 'In most persons the end of the nose is — well, just flesh, but yours is *alive*.' And she went to the glass and scrutinized her nose.

Whitman's comment to E. M. Allen, after first meeting John Burroughs, was, 'His face is like a field of wheat.' Something of what the poet saw in the young man of twenty-six was visible in the face even in declining years — a mobile countenance, in which both youth and mellowness were seen.

In build, Mr. Burroughs was sturdy and well-knit, with good muscular development and exceptional coördination. His height was five feet seven inches. Erect and spry up to his eighty-third year, he showed thereafter some diminution in agility, and sometimes when wearied stooped a bit. In his eightieth year he could walk the steel rails of a railway indefinitely, maintaining his balance as when a boy. Retaining much of his physical endurance into advanced age, he climbed mountains, chopped wood, lifted heavy burdens, and, to a

lesser degree, kept up the activities of middle life. Once, when six and seventy years of age, on being urged by a friend not to stand so near the edge of a cliff, he promptly proceeded to stand upon his hands near the edge, his feet high in the air — just to prove there was no danger.

Endurance for intellectual work never equalled that for physical activity. A few hours' close application in the forenoon was all he attempted for the day.

He was wont to say that his 'big soft head' had always been easily upset; that as a boy, he sometimes became nauseated even from riding in a sleigh. Up to his seventy-second year he easily became seasick, after which time he was practically exempt. The rough inter-island voyages in Hawaii gave him but little discomfort, and he suffered no mountain-sickness on the lofty summit of Haleakala. Always he became faint at the sight of blood, or of any serious physical injury. Sometimes even a graphic account of an injury upset him. In advanced years he was much subject to dizziness, especially when turning quickly, or rising suddenly.

Even as a boy his heart was unduly excitable, and it continued so through life. When hunting, it thumped wildly against his chest at sight of game; and all his life it was subject to functional derangement from digestive or emotional disturbances. In advanced age it showed a valvular insufficiency.

'My brain was always quickly impressed,' he said, 'and I had a vivid memory. My emotions were always too easily aroused.' He had 'the cool and reasoning brain,' but 'the quick, unreasoning heart,' that many another highly organized person has had. 'My blood boils' was an expression often upon his tongue during the World War, and then, axe in hand, he would vent his anger on the firewood, until he could calm down enough to attack the enemy with his pen. An entry in his Journal in 1885 shows his appreciation of his own impulsiveness:

> Wanted: A scale to weigh my words with. One of my ever-present faults is a want of deliberation in speaking and writing. I am cautious in everything except in what I say. In conversation I need to charge myself to think well before I speak; and in writing, to deliberate long before making a positive statement.

The rôle played by the glands of internal secretion in the moulding of personality is still too much a matter of theory to

admit of many deductions here. That there was in general a well-balanced glandular sufficiency seems evident, with over-activity, rather than the reverse, in most of the endocrines. Considering the feminine cast of some of his emotional reactions, endocrinologists would doubtless say that the cortex of the adrenal glands was too thin. Mr. Burroughs himself expressed the matter thus:

> I was never a fighter. I fear that at times I may have been a shirker, but I have shirked one thing, or one duty, that I might the more heartily give myself to another. He also serves who sometimes runs away. . . . I should have made a good scout and skirmisher, but a poor fighter in the ranks.

He said that it was probably the nudge within him from Grandfather Kelly (a soldier in the Revolution), that prompted him, in 1864, to seek out Grant's veterans, stationed then near Washington, when General Early was making his demonstration against the Capital; but he added that the old Continental would have disowned him, could he have seen how he dodged the bullets that came singing over the rifle-pits where he lay bivouacking one night with the seasoned soldiers; and especially had he seen him quail when he watched a company of soldiers hurried away in the darkness toward the firing-line. 'If I had been ordered to go with them, my legs would have crumpled under me — I couldn't have gone, if they were to have shot me for the failure.' Yet he had the moral courage to confess this, as well as another humilating experience which occurred when he went into a field-hospital later, and tried to help with the wounded; did help, in fact, till so unnerved by the sight of blood and the heaps of amputated limbs, that he had to get out into the air, later to creep away in the darkness, where, amid bales of hay, he awaited the dawn. The anatomico-physiological concomitants for these reactions may have been in his thin skin and thin adrenal cortices, yet what shall one say of like manifestations in General Grant,[1] who, after having visited a military hospital, confessed, 'But I couldn't stand the amputations, and had to go out in the rain and sit for most of the night under a tree.'

A complaint once made against Mr. Burroughs by a militant friend is here recalled. The friend, who was fighting hard for bird-protection, could not understand why John Bur-

[1] Quoted by Mr. R. U. Johnson in *Remembered Yesterdays.*

roughs, lover of birds, would not join the organization for bird-protection and fight, too. He failed to appreciate that the forte of John o' Birds did not lie in fighting for anything; and that what he might have done in a militant way for the birds, was but a drop in the bucket to what he did do, in his own way, for more than fifty years.

His correspondents in his later years sometimes got reflections from Mr. Burroughs's indiscretions in diet, or his insufficient sleep; and if at such times they sent him a manuscript, begging his frank opinion of the same, they got what they asked for; although he would sometimes dictate one letter to free his mind, and another that would do to send. This being the case, he would say, 'This is what I ought to say, but you can modify it, if you like.' Again, firmly, 'Now, put this just as I say it, even if you think it is too severe.' Not that all his adverse opinions of manuscripts thrust upon him were due to temporary indisposition; but in all cases where adverse opinions were inevitable, his indisposition rendered them less conciliatory. However, no matter how capricious and irritable he was when ill; no matter how precipitate and, sometimes, even unjust he was when angered; when he was well he was kind and forbearing. And on becoming calm after anger, he was, through his sense of justice, quick to correct and atone for hasty speech and action. His correspondents doubtless had little conception what demands were made upon him by strangers and friends, and also by friends importuning him in behalf of their friends. He resented such intrusions, not only because of their inroads upon his time, but because they so often placed him in the position of hurting the correspondent by telling the naked truth; or of stultifying himself by softening it. And yet, until the last three years of his life the forbearance he showed in this respect was surprising. Here follows a letter which he dictated to a publisher in behalf of a new literary aspirant who wished him to write an introduction to the nature section of a book she had compiled:

> Nearly every mail brings me letters asking me to write something for this or that cause or purpose, and in trying to respond, the cream of my time is gone. The other day I had the courage to refuse, and hereafter I intend flatly to refuse all such requests.
>
> I am an old man, and now I am going to refuse to do anything that I have to goad myself into doing. I think I have earned my

freedom. I shall not be able to comply with Miss B——'s request. . . . If she wants to use this letter as an illustration of *human nature* driven to desperation, she may have it. . . .

To a certain organization begging his coöperation in some special project, he replied:

I have neither the time nor strength to give attention to these matters. I am not a member of the Authors' League. . . . I am not in league with anything, and do not mean to be.

[And then, as though to take the sting out of this, he added:]

All this is work for younger, and less preoccupied, men. . . . [Adding, to me:] Tell him I have business of my own — there are birds' nests to find, and wild strawberries to pick.

Recurring for a moment to physiological aspects: The Burroughs folk, as a family, showed marked tendency to vascular weakness, weakened heart muscles, and renal insufficiency, and Mr. Burroughs was no exception. Several years before his death, on experiencing a serious emotional disturbance, he wrote, 'Hearts don't break, but blood-vessels do, and that is the door through which I shall go out sometime.'

3. Likes and Dislikes

Since what one loves and reveres is an index to his character, a glance at the men and things which most appealed to Our Friend should prove helpful. There were certain names he always uttered in a reverent tone — Christ, Socrates, Kepler, Wordsworth, Carlyle, Emerson, Darwin, Whitman — a grouping which may well account for the breadth and catholicity of his mind.

Nature, literature, and science were the liberating influences of his life, and he was highly susceptible to music, poetry, and architecture. The overwhelming effect upon him of St. Paul's Cathedral may be recalled. Architectural bridges always fascinated him. The architectural features of the great Ashokan water-system never failed to elicit his admiration. He was quick to detect the false in architecture, to see when a thing was not structurally true. He rejoiced to see practical ability in architecture come out in his son.

In his 'Last Harvest,' lamenting his dwindling interest in poetry, he reminds himself that Darwin had a like experience; but really the falling-off was more apparent than real; or,

rather, was in the poetry itself, since he retained his love for the poets who had drawn him all his life; and, to the last, when coming upon new real poetry, was quick to recognize and rejoice in it. As for science itself, as his interest in it deepened, he saw more clearly the poetry in it. Science might at first chill him; he might resent the materialistic trend it begot in him; but if he pondered it long enough, he was sure to see its beauty, as sure as he was, in writing about scientific facts, to throw around them the witchery of the ideal.

His love for persons never blinded him to their limitations. He could even see the faults in the birds and the chipmunks. The robin that built in his summer-house, and made him so uncomfortable by her objections to his presence, the orioles that pecked his grapes, the purple finches that rifled his cherries in embryo, the phœbes that harbored infinitesimal creatures along with their nestlings, — he upbraided them in no half-hearted way, and when he tired of the wren's chatter he would call imploringly, 'Oh, Muggins, Muggins! do be still!' While, much as he loved that 'clever beastie,' when the chipmunk dug up his peas, he made war upon him.

He had no love for the woodchuck. The only seemingly cruel thing I ever knew him to do was early in our acquaintance. As we were sauntering along a country road of an August day, followed by the farm dogs, Cuff and Spot, the dogs suddenly gave chase to a woodchuck, and Mr. Burroughs broke and ran, too. Taking refuge in a stone-wall, the 'chuck would have outwitted the yelping dogs, had not the man lent a hand and removed some of the stones. Soon the dogs dragged the shrieking victim forth, and, in a twinkling, reduced it to a lifeless mass. My hero fell several pegs in my estimation then, and his explanation as to the harm done by woodchucks did but little to excuse the unequal battle in which he had taken part.

Affection for his kin was bound up in everything pertaining to them. He could not destroy anything that had been theirs. For years the old clothes that had been Hiram's hung upstairs at Slabsides, his old hat on its accustomed peg. Hiram's letters, and those of all his kin, he treasured always, Julian's also, and those of certain other friends. I recall how he once protested, and fairly cringed, on seeing me throw into the fire a beautiful letter I had just read to him. 'How *could* you

destroy such a letter! Have you no sentiment?' he asked reprovingly.

To his habit of preserving things, just for old association's sake, I am indebted for the wealth of data used in the preparation of this work. Yet he had no system of classifying or preserving anything, and much of value was lost through the ravages of mice and squirrels, the spurts of strenuous housekeeping, and the importunities of souvenir-hunters.

His reader needs no reminder that he had a *penchant* for homely 'shirt-sleeve English.' 'I like to break the rules once in a while,' he would say; or, 'I like to use words in a free, flexible way,' — this when I would become meticulous in pointing out flies in the amber. He claimed, too, the right to use a split infinitive, or to end the sentence with a preposition, if that best suited his purpose. I remember once questioning the correctness of the word 'reapt' in his manuscript. To my query he replied that he did not know — had used it without thinking. In doubt, I said, 'Suppose we see what Webster has to say?' To my chagrin I found 'reapt' sanctioned, the authority cited being John Burroughs! and here I had been picking flaws with one whom the dictionaries quoted!

Certain words of pleasing sound he rolled like a sweet morsel under his tongue. In writing he had his own rhythmic cadences into which he fell naturally. Countless passages in his books charm the ear by their limpid flow, as their clarity and beauty charm the mind; they seem the audible translation of his emotions. This is less true of his poems than of his prose.

The simple, inevitable beauty of Wordsworth and Tennyson reëchoed in his heart. Their lines were often on his lips. Among the many I recall, are these:

'The music in my heart I bore
Long after it was heard no more.'

'Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.'

'And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each in natural piety.'

'The little speedwell's darling blue.'

'But what am I?
An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.'

The 'absurd Latin names' for the birds roused his scorn. When, in 1917, we were reading proof of the section on American ornithology in the Standard Library of Natural History, of which he was consulting editor, he declared, 'There's no sense in it whatever'; and when one ventured, 'But for scientific purposes — for universal identification?' he only replied testily: 'No — I would go back to the common names. If the plain English of "God," "home," "mother," are good enough for these, it ought to be good enough for the birds and the flowers,' — an instance of his rash speech in certain moods.

His love for simplicity almost betrayed him into joining the ranks of the simplified spellers. He himself was a poor speller. There were certain words he could be depended upon to misspell. When the devotees of spelling reform appealed to him, they must have received enough encouragement to enroll him, for they began sending him notices of their meetings, and bundles of their 'literature.' Defending himself for having given encouragement to them, he said: 'Anything arbitrary always was hard for me. "Muskeeto" is a good deal more rational way to spell the name of the little cuss than the way you do — that is why I want simplified spelling — all poor spellers want it.' But after enduring the influx of their pamphlets for a time, he became rebellious, and, consigning the latest supply to the fire (and their senders also), said: 'Tell them never to send me their stuff again. They are a d-a-m-*n* nuisance, tell them, and *spell it that way*. Besides [with a twinkle in the eye], their spelling is harder than the old way, after all.'

Doubtless persons who met Mr. Burroughs at dinners were sometimes disappointed at his unresponsiveness, for he was not keen about conversing at meals. His habitual silence at meals was largely the outcome of living much alone, but also because he preferred silence to talk which roiled him, and interfered with digestion.

'And then,' a bit defiantly, 'I go to the table to eat — to masticate — and you can't do that and chatter.' During the last decade of his life, however, he was weaned from this silence to a considerable extent, probably to his benefit, and really enjoyed a cheery atmosphere at table, to which he contributed not a little.

Much as he loved the wild flowers, he had scant liking for

cultivated flowers, except a few old-fashioned ones. In one of his early letters to me (concerning the value of the natural over the artificial), he wrote: 'I care nothing for garden flowers, or those you can get at the florist's, but when a schoolgirl offers me a bit of arbutus, she touches my heart. I had rather have one pint of wild strawberries than a gallon of tame ones.' Roses and carnations affected him like sophisticated beauties of the drawing-room — if he could not help admiring them, he soon made his escape from them. He would look unmoved upon chrysanthemums that would challenge the admiration of all beholders, and when rallied for his coldness would say, 'How artificial they look! they lack the modesty of Nature.' For papery hydrangeas he felt contempt, and he had a positive aversion to the crimson rambler — 'soulless, scentless, flaunting thing!'

To spoken eloquence he was peculiarly susceptible. As may be remembered, Beecher always put him under a spell. The eloquence of Robert G. Ingersoll, he said, was 'so compelling you felt you could go home and do it, too — just as when I heard Ole Bull play the violin, I thought, "By Jove! I can play the violin myself!"' For a short period he was taken with the oratory of Mr. William Jennings Bryan, but when that gentleman suspended the law of gravitation, his interest in him waned.

Apropos his avowed susceptibility to music: dance music always got into his heels — he could never sit still when old-time reels were played, but would jump up and dance a jig or a break-down. Sometimes he regaled the family with a song and dance learned in boyhood from an old sailor:

'Oh, I danced all night and my heel kep' a-rockin', my heel kep' a-rockin',
And I danced with a gal with a hole in her stockin' — the prettiest gal in the room!'

When in a particularly jovial mood he would recite with great relish the following anonymous lines:

'King David and King Solomon
Led merry, merry lives,
With many, many lady friends,
And many, many wives.
But when old age crept over them,
With many, many qualms,
King Solomon wrote the Proverbs,
And King David wrote the Psalms.'

Parodies came easy to him. One rainy day when a large delegation of girl visitors came, he delighted them by reciting a parody which he modeled after the 'Rain Song' of Robert Loveman:

It isn't raining rain to me,
  It's raining pretty girls,
In every summer shower I see
  Bright eyes and dancing curls.
The clouds of gray obscure the day,
  And darken field and town,
It isn't raining rain to me,
  It's raining babies down.

4. Fragments of Self-Analysis

From time to time, from either his talk or letters, I gathered the self-analytical comments which follow:

My primary interest is in things and not in men. I feel much more at home in the fields and woods than I do in the street or in the homes of strangers. I am more myself in the presence of Nature than in the presence of human beings. This is why I said I am not so fully developed on my moral as on my intellectual side. I cannot deal with people as successfully as I can deal with things. A man is related to his fellows on his moral side, to Nature he is related on his intellectual and emotional side. I love my fellow-men, and like to serve them, but a human crowd attracts me far less than a crowd of trees, or a flock of birds, or a herd of sheep or cows. The social obligations sit very lightly upon me. In fashionable circles I should die of inanition. Confined in the city my heart would break. A chipmunk digging his hole is of more interest to me than a man building his house, though this house-building is about the most interesting thing a man does.

How tired I do get of much company, and how I am healed by natural solitudes! I seem to know instinctively how to deal with the animals, but not how to deal with men. I make but feeble resistance to bores, and to the encroachments of designing persons. Yet I am a poor hermit. I could not live alone.

As a rule women are more congenial to me than men. Is it because woman is the weaker vessel? I think it is because the Celt in me gives me many feminine idiosyncrasies. Masculine I am in my intellectual grasp and impatience of trifles, in my physical courage, and mental processes, but feminine in my emotions, my shyness, and in many of my ineptitudes. I should make a poor judge, and a poor preacher, so far as a preacher's duty is to rebuke sinners. I should be among the first to say to the frail one, 'Go, and sin no more.' There is not much iron or granite in my constitution. I suppose there is some clay. There is certainly something that is very yielding, and very quick to receive an impression. I am morbidly sensitive to my

surroundings, both human and unhuman, but can adjust myself easier to the latter than to the former.

I have more intellect than character, while such a man as John Muir had more character than intellect. Muir was a child in dealing with the nature of things, and the reason of things; his strength came out when he met men, or explored the mountains and glaciers. He has only half expressed himself in his books — the real Muir is only half there. But my books express me much more fully than my life or presence do. I know more as a writer than as a man, and impress my distant readers more than I do my neighbors. Hence people in Australia get a higher opinion of me than do the people with whom I daily rub elbows; but no one could thoroughly know John Muir, or feel his power, or have any idea of the rank, cantankerous, and withal lovable Scot that he was, until he met him.

It is such considerations as these that justify my remark that my deficiencies are chiefly on the moral side of my nature.

At another time, continuing this train of thought, he writes:

I do not know that it is exactly true that my moral fibre is lax and weak. If I may draw a figure from geology it is probably true that my moral qualities are the softer rock in the strata that make up my being, the easiest worn away. I see that I carry the instinct of the naturalist into all my activities. If a thing is natural, sane, wholesome, that is enough; whether or not it is conventionally correct, or squares with the popular conception of morality, does not matter to me. I undoubtedly lack the heroic fibre. My edge is much easier turned than was that, say, of Thoreau. Austerity would ill become me. One would see through the disguise. Yes, there is much soft rock in my make-up. Is that why I shrink from the wear and tear of the world?

In many ways I suffer from not being narrow. I am like an unfenced common — people run over me and through me. I can't resist them or snub them. This is my weakness. I am selfish enough, and yet I have not enough self-hood, and do not discriminate sharply enough between myself and other things and people. All this has helped me in my writing about nature, but hindered me in writing about men.

This great Babylon [New York] dissipates me — scatters me — if I had the time and the privacy I could not write here. My thoughts will not gather at all at the end of my pen. I get no good sleep here, and I eat things I ought not to.

The capacity for self-torture has always been strong in me, as strong as the capacity for joy. Sometimes I get fairly tipsy with joy. I make the most of every sorrow that comes to me, and of many that do not come.

I am always full of sentiment, but am not often sentimental. One

is sentimental, I take it, when his emotions languish and pine, and are sicklied over with the pale cast of ineffectual longing.

A friend in Chicago wrote me that she heard a sermon in that city from a Presbyterian pulpit, and the human illustration of it was J. B. How curious that one rarely seen within a church should be used to illustrate their doctrine of love! No doubt love *is* my ruling emotion — love and longing. How I have loved the birds, the fields, the woods, the Old Home, Father and Mother, and all my days! Out of this love I have written my books — I am quick to anger, yet my anger evaporates like a summer shower. Anger poisons my blood, but love and joy are my life.

I find on reflection that in my writing and thinking I have unconsciously run parallel to Emerson in this respect: he in the air, I upon the earth; he celebrating the moral law, I celebrating the natural law; he glorifying the ideal, I glorifying the real. He goes to the concrete for symbols and images, I go for laws and principles; his mind works by sallies, mine by logical processes. I bring heaven down, he lifts earth up. He affirms, I speculate.

I find this bit of self-questioning in one of his letters to a correspondent in the eighteen-nineties:

What is my love for Nature? spiritual or material? I do not love her at a distance, or look on and admire her. I lay my heart to hers. I melt into her moods, I drain her of her secrets and meet her with passion and warmth. The soul's passion? Maybe, yet it seems to me the whole of me, body, soul, and mind, is abandoned to her.

In 1903 he wrote:

I wonder if you have guessed all my faults and weaknesses. I suppose most of them come from my extreme sensibility. My fear of giving people pain amounts to a positive weakness. How I envy —— —— at times in this respect. Her bluntness or frankness is often brutal. That is the other extreme; but I cannot speak out when I ought to. This —— —— calls deception and hypocrisy — to appear glad to see people when you are not; to show more interest in them than you really feel, etc.

The fragment transcribed below is one he handed me in 1915, saying, 'Here is something I wrote. You may find use for it in your book.'

I see that in certain aspects of my mental condition I am brother to the primeval savage. He only slumbers within me. My grumbling at the weather, my swearing at the laws of force and matter, my involuntary feeling that inanimate things are either for or against me, are all savage traits. When I make a mistake, or a false move, I swear at myself, 'You d—— old fool, did you not know better than

that?' When I am sighting my rifle at a woodchuck and I cannot see the sight well, I swear at my eyes. And then I swear at my habit of swearing. What a foolish thing it all is! I suppose the more I give way to it, the more the habit grows upon me.

Is it this habit of reading my own psychology into Nature that gives life and interest to my nature writings?

Nearly all my philosophical speculations are a search for the reasons of things. When I think, I am a philosopher; when I act, I am a child, or a savage. My petulance and impatience are childish. I am as tolerant as the day toward people. I let them run over me, but toward things, I am exacting and unjust.

I laugh at women when I see how easily they clash; how their quills stick into each other; and the next moment I envy them their forbearance toward fate and fortune.

Once after he had spoken of having done only the things he had wanted to do, he continued:

My only justification, that I can see, is that I haven't wanted anything exceptional. I have been contented with the common things about me. I have paid the price for the good I have got, but it hasn't been a high price, and in my books I have sought to impart to the world the joy I have had in Nature and in life — but that was because it was a joy to me to write about it — it was never a task — always a pleasure.

In nearly everything I have done I have sought my own pleasure — I've written my books not to please others, but to please myself. My pleasures have not been what are usually called narrow, selfish pleasures. They have been those a large part of my fellows could share.

My life has been selfish as an artist's, a poet's, a philosopher's life is selfish — they seek self-expression. I haven't sold my possessions and given to the poor, but I have shown the poor on what easy terms they can live; have set them an example of sane, wholesome and simple living.

Many get pleasures in self-denial, in going into the slums. It gave Whitman great pleasure to go to the hospitals and minister to the sick soldiers. I never found my pleasure in such beneficent service to my fellows.

5. Seven Tests of Great Men

John Burroughs would have been the first to dissent from being called a great man, yet there is a certain interest in trying to determine how he measures up to the seven tests of great men set forth by Emerson.

Of the candidate for greatness Emerson first asks, *Has he any aim which with all his soul he pursues?*

The outstanding traits in John Burroughs which seem most to have influenced his life were eagerness for knowledge, and the urge for self-expression — to know, and to write. He began early to seek to understand the needs of his own nature, to formulate his ethical ideals, and to work out a philosophy of life. His plan as practically worked out made for individuality in both thought and life. In his first article to appear in print he showed uncommon independence of thought as he attacked the vagaries of spiritualism. Though he may then have been (as he said he was) bashful, tongue-tied, and irresolute in action, his instinct for the truth led him thus early to pounce upon the spurious, and with a surety of tone surprising in a youth of nineteen. His was what George Eliot styled an alkaline nature which began to *fiz-z-z* the instant the slightest acid of falsehood approached him. In other early, unreclaimed, essays, crude as they were, one sees him probing, probing for the truth. One of his earliest extant letters shows his belief in himself and his future success, a belief which sustained him through a prolonged period of uncertainty and gloom.

The homely life of a dairy farm, poor in literature, in art, in culture of all kinds, still provided a favorable groundwork, while his own aspiration guided him to the means of self-culture. From the start he saw that art is long, but he was willing to work, undaunted by hampering conditions, from the years of youthful apprenticeship and on throughout his long life.

It was no easy thing for a youth of his temperament to follow his own bent, since it ran counter to the opinions of those who would naturally have influenced him during the formative period. It is really surprising that with his natural shrinking from contention of all kinds, he could plant himself so firmly upon his own instincts and pursue so persistently his aims. Every one, when confronted by the problem of how he can best walk between self-realization and self-renunciation, has to find his own answer; but one marvels that so plastic a nature did not, when conflicts arose, make more compromises, even to the selling of his birthright for a mess of pottage. That he was able to walk (or saunter) toward self-realization; that he sometimes had recourse to flight rather than contention; that he climbed over barriers which Fate or Custom thrust in his

way; that sometimes he strode with no gentle tread over superstition and insincerity; and pressed on unswervingly to his goal, is clearly seen in surveying his career.

To Emerson's second test — *Does he work for show?* — one may well let the honest work of John Burroughs speak for itself.

Has he health of mind? does he work in good humor? next asks Emerson.

What was natural, wholesome, beautiful, good, and true most concerned John Burroughs. His mind was eminently sane and healthy. One may apply to his writing what Thoreau said of that of Raleigh and others of the Elizabethan period: 'It is as if a green bough were laid across the page, and we are refreshed as by the sight of fresh grass in midwinter or early spring. You have constantly the warrant of life and experience in what you read.'

As to working in good humor, he could work only when in good humor, and work put him in still better humor. Sleep and digestion were better when he worked, the day was brighter. Composition exhilarated him; and though he found revision irksome, his vital prose was not attained without painstaking effort and much pruning.

Emerson's fourth test is, *Has he ability to set in motion the minds of others?*

The answer is so obviously affirmative as to need no amplification beyond the mere mention of the countless nature-study clubs, and Burroughs clubs, and, in fact, the whole outdoor movement, so largely traceable to his influence. His readers could say unanimously,

> 'I hearing get, who had but ears,
> And sight, who had but eyes before.'
> (THOREAU)

Has he belief in a Superhuman influence? Emerson next queries.

To the indwelling power in the universe, which created all things he gave unswerving allegiance; and he regarded the mind of man as the crowning achievement of this Universal Beneficence. He looked upon this power as beneficial in the main, though having aspects which might seem malevolent from a narrow, individual standpoint. To him both matter

and spirit are divine, their source being One. Behind all inanimate things, all thinking things, and all objects of all thought, he saw and revered the eternal Something that governs all things. In youth the emotional conception of his relation to the Whole found expression in his 'Waiting'; and all his life, with a reverence as deep as the psalmist's, he wandered in green pastures and beside still waters. Serenely he went his way, and when the shadows began to lengthen, he voiced the same truth that had been whispered to his soul in his prime — a happy confidence in revelation here and now, a wholehearted, rational, and reverent acceptance of the universe.

Emerson asks in his sixth test, *Are his aims unselfish aims?*

Mr. Burroughs declared he lived for self-development. He sought to live a complete and harmonious life, and to become a literary artist; to glean from all branches of science, coördinate his knowledge, and, through his art, make literature of that knowledge. He was the artist added to nature. Even in his brief letters to friends, whether fanciful, tender, serious, or humorous, his phrases became literary in the best sense. They were sincere; they had style; they were the man. His work has proved a boon to mankind; and yet his service was an unconscious service. He disclaimed having written to do good, but only to please himself. Thus, in a sense, he may be called a hedonist. Still, since the pleasure for which he lived was a worthy one in which others were sharers, is it fairly styled a selfish pleasure?

The final test is, *Has he breadth of vision? Is he able to free himself from prejudice? Can he treat trifles as trifles?*

To this tripartite question of Emerson one must answer both affirmatively and negatively. As to *breadth of vision*, surely he saw life steadily, and saw it whole. If it be true, as Mr. Havelock Ellis teaches in the 'Dance of Life,' that the art of life is made up of three main aspects, — religion, art, and science, — and that the true artist of life keeps them flowing in one channel, John Burroughs must have known well the art of life; for he kept the three together to an unusual degree. He gave heed to the journeying atoms, and the journeying stars; saw the divine in the soil beneath his feet, as in the star-dust in the farthermost depths of space; reverenced the creative energy, and the mind of man that can comprehend all created

things, evolve art and science out of nature, and correlate it all in a joyously sentient, rational, and ever aspiring existence.

As to his *ability to free himself from prejudice*, one can claim for him less than in any of the other tests. His disdain for the narrowness of the theologian sometimes led him into hasty judgments, and to something like intolerance for their intolerance. Like Thoreau, he so loved the chickadees that he was sometimes a bit unfair to the D.D.'s. His prejudices against academic men and methods, too, were almost as apparent as against orthodoxy. When academicians pronounced judgment against Whitman, for example, their limitation blinded him to their excellence. Likewise in regard to the work of laboratory experimentalists: his own tastes were so different that he never seemed quite to recognize the need or unquestioned worth of their contributions to the sum of human knowledge. No, it was often with difficulty, if at all, that he freed himself from prejudice.

As to *treating trifles as trifles*, he knew the true values of life, and was keen to strip away the husks and get at the kernels, as is attested by his simple, natural manner of living.

Perhaps it is too soon to say whether John Burroughs was a great man; too soon to attempt to weigh his character; to measure his reach of intellect, and the intensity of his emotional force; and yet in surveying the man in his work and in his acts, some evaluation should now be possible, even though Time, and more impartial judges, may be needed for the ultimate estimation. I myself, from twenty years of intimate association with him, look upon his life as one of industry, probity, rectitude, and signal achievement. If, being human, his life was marred by shortcomings; if deep-seated tendencies had their way with him, his heart indeed reaped where it had sown, and, with bitterness, at times, he garnered up its fruits of tears. Like every other struggling soul, he had his hours of defeat, of contrition, and expiation; but he did not flinch at retributive justice; he did not whimper at fate; and did not cease the upward endeavor. Checkered though his life was, he had great joy in it, and he communicated much of joy and contentment to the lives of others. I regard the benefaction of his life and work as among the indisputable legacies of our time.

6. Opposing Traits in Thoreau and Burroughs

Between Thoreau and Burroughs there were certain points of comparison, but the differences far outweigh the resemblances.

Both men obeyed their impulses to live close to Nature and to interpret her, although Thoreau, especially, interpreted himself more than Nature. Both were equipped with keen perceptions which they cultivated assiduously. They were both profoundly influenced by Emerson, Thoreau chiefly by reason of propinquity, though Burroughs apparently felt more deeply the pull of Emerson's lofty thought. Both were shy, unworldly, uncommercial, and they had a similar craving for solitude; Burroughs, however, felt the need of comradeship as well. While he could have said, with Thoreau, that he was the happiest the forenoons when nobody called, he could have the better concealed his disappointment when his solitude was invaded. Thoreau's persistent aim was to put the whole of Nature between himself and his fellows, while through Nature Burroughs unconsciously drew others to him.

The unsocial (almost anti-social) instinct seems to have been inherent in Thoreau, while Burroughs was unsocial only by spells. Hawthorne's gentle sarcasm when, in commenting on Thoreau's retreat to his hermitage, he spoke of the 'beauty of conspicuous solitude,' was hardly justifiable. There was probably no posing in Thoreau's life at Walden, any more than in Burroughs's at Slabsides. The experiment of Thoreau lasted only two years; with Burroughs it extended over a quarter of a century. The motives that caused the latter to take to the woods have been seen to have been more complex than those which actuated Thoreau. To open trade with the Celestial Empire, and to reduce life to its lowest terms, were the avowed motives of Thoreau. They both knew that the most precious things in life were to be had without money; and they were equally enamored of the simple life, though each chose his own brand of simplicity; just as each lived for ideal ends, however much their ideals differed.

Thoreau said he wanted to crow loud enough to wake his neighbors up; but imagine his consternation had his crowing brought them out to Walden! Much as he scorned them for following their avocations, how he would have railed at them

had they come trespassing in his swamps and bogs! Since his every walk was a sort of crusade, of course no infidel might saunter in his Holy Land. One marvels that he suffered Spalding to pass through his own woods with no more molestation than the snickering in which he and the squirrels indulged at Spalding's fatuous belief in his ownership.

After spending a day with the selectmen of Concord, Thoreau felt 'inexpressibly begrimed'; and he confessed to having no more sympathy with his townsmen than with the mobs of India or China. When he did not speak of his neighbors as barbarians, or foreigners, or hornets, or hyenas, he still described them as narrow-minded and groveling, and thanked heaven he was not as they. He found the pigs in the streets of New York (1843) the most respectable part of the population; and as for the society of young women, it was 'the most unprofitable' he had ever tried.

Look at this picture, and then on that of the 'Man-not-afraid-of-Company,' whose latchstring on Slabsides' rustic door was always out!

In his Journal the Hermit of Walden tells of his humiliation because a neighbor asked him to leave some handbills at a certain place in passing. This recalls, by contrast, an incident related with amusement, devoid of humiliation, by Mr. Burroughs. When walking along a country road in the suburbs of La Jolla, California, in 1920, he was hailed by an old woman sitting on her porch, and asked to take down her washing from the line, she being lame, or otherwise disabled. He followed her instructions, and even stopped for a chat, after having disposed of the basket and clothespins.

Alone at Walden, Thoreau said perversely that he was no more lonely than the loons on the pond, or the mulleins in the pasture, the South Wind, or the North Star. Perhaps not, though they had other loons and mulleins, other winds and stars to hobnob with.

'Why should I be lonely?' he asked with bravado. 'Is not our planet in the milky way?'

Burroughs preferred more sublunary sources of milk-supply — such as rural divinities on near-by hills; and as for the milk of human kindness, he would not have relished that if transported from such a distance. He evidently did try, however, to simulate Thoreau's readiness to say 'no' when, bracing

himself to refuse an invitation to the Pacific Coast, he asked, 'Why should I wander? I can see the constellations from my own door-step.' Yet, as has been seen, he could not stick to it, and in a few days was off to meet John Muir in the Petrified Forests!

While both men were strong in their local attachments, I fancy the feeling of Mr. Burroughs for his native place had more of yearning affection in it than had Thoreau's for Concord. The latter refused to go to Paris, fearing he would miss something in Concord. Concord was a microcosm, and he doubtless clung to it rather as a field of intensive observation than as an object of affection. Finding so little in Dr. Kane's 'Arctic Explorations,' that could not be observed in Concord, how did he ever get so far away as the Maine Woods, or Canada? In comparison, Mr. Burroughs traveled a good deal: twice to Europe, several times, respectively, to Canada, through the South, and to the Pacific Coast; he also visited Jamaica, Cuba, Bermuda, Hawaii, and Alaska. (He was even an hour or two in Asia!) And although he declared himself as local as a turtle, and usually left home reluctantly, he always showed an eager interest in new lands and the new face in them which Nature turned to him.

In practical life both men were handy and resourceful. Thoreau, especially, could turn his Yankee hand to anything — surveying, pencil-making, fence-building, carpenter work, papering, whitewashing, bricking up a fireplace, and so on; in fact, he said he had as many trades as fingers. Mr. Burroughs could help build his woodland cabin, his chimney, his fireplace; could make rustic furniture; raise superior garden-stuff; and run a vineyard successfully; and, pedestrian that he was, even learned to run an automobile in his seventy-sixth year!

They were alike in some of their 'unpaid occupations,' such as Thoreau enumerated — inspector of storms, surveyor of forest paths and all across-lot routes. Thoreau made the earth say 'beans' (and said a good deal about them himself); and Burroughs made it say 'grapes,' 'celery,' 'peas,' and 'corn'; and he incidentally raised enough to supply quite a family besides himself. As for his grapes, he not only got them to market with the bloom on them (an aim which he realized with the fruit of other 'vines' than grape-vines), but he netted a tidy sum from them in the open market; and still found time

to write of the birds that pecked his grapes, and of the 'divine soil' out of which they grew. Thoreau's concern, however, was with more 'celestial agriculture'; and when he did stultify himself, and, knuckling down, worked for hire, he felt the money thus made was tainted.

Thoreau gave something of a Jack Horner twist — 'See what a great boy am I!' — to his bath in the 'primal sanities'; but Burroughs went his way quietly, finding, as did Thoreau, life sweetest close to the bone, yet willing that others should mingle in the haunts of men without making of that a bone of contention. He did not boast that he would not go round the corner to see the world blow up; he even suspected he would enjoy the spectacle, if it had to be; but Thoreau's saying, that he would sooner see a snake cast its skin, than to see a king crowned, is offset by Burroughs taking to the woods in search of spring flowers, instead of attending Lincoln's second inauguration.

Although Burroughs was willing to concede to others the liberty he asked for himself, he was impatient with his friends who lived at high pressure. He used to lament the untimely death of two cherished friends, both editors, poets, and philanthropists, — Richard Watson Gilder, and Francis Fisher Browne, — who spent themselves so lavishly for causes near their hearts, and kept only shreds of time for their own creative work.

Thoreau was a sturdy sayer of 'no,' while Mr. Burroughs found it a most difficult word to articulate. One finds Thoreau stimulating, Burroughs nourishing; Thoreau exasperating, Burroughs conciliatory. The one challenges, the other convinces; the one deals in exaggerations, the other has profound respect for facts. Thoreau delights in overstating, merely to startle his reader; Burroughs makes one glad that things are as they are.

It is significant that Thoreau's favorite season was winter, and Burroughs's, spring. Yet, with none of the former's stoicism, Burroughs welcomed winter when it came — not, as did Thoreau, as something to be wrestled with, so much as for the shut-in feeling it gives, the better opportunity to get near one's self. Out of doors he was 'a willow in the wilderness,' but by his study fire he mused on what his saunterings had yielded, or looked into his heart, and wrote.

In his three essays on Thoreau (in 'Indoor Studies,' 'Literary Values,' and 'The Last Harvest'), Burroughs has set forth Thoreau's distinguishing traits, and few there be in which one traces any semblance to Burroughs himself. He points out the resisting quality of Thoreau, his uncompromisingness, his austerity, his rigid devotion to principle, his tireless pursuit of the ideal, his crispness, his sarcasm, his innate wildness, and the gritty, unflinching quality which, in an earlier age, would have made him a martyr. He declares that Thoreau was no soft-shelled egg to be dented by every straw in the nest; a remark, by contrast, suggesting his own 'chicken-heartedness,' and his own 'soft shell.' Sarcasm found little place in the speech or writing of Burroughs, and the Stoic was not in him.

Could any one mistake a page of Burroughs for one of Thoreau, or the reverse? Yet when writing about Thoreau, Burroughs does sometimes suggest him a bit, taking on a little of his tone. Once, in writing to Myron Benton, he said: 'I know his [Thoreau's] quality is very penetrating and contagious. Reading him is like eating onions — one must look out or the flavor will reach his own page.' We get a whiff of Thoreau when Burroughs says of him, 'He was too religious to go to church, too patriotic to pay his taxes, too fervent a humanist to interest himself in the social affairs of his neighborhood.' Again when he says, 'Truth was not his quest, but truth made in Concord.'

To say that both writers had wit and humor is like saying the sky is blue, the grass, green; and yet there are those who have failed to find wit or humor in either of them! One is entirely at a loss to account for Lowell's inability to find humor in Thoreau; but in the case of a critic who knew Burroughs in both his life and his works, and failed to see either his wit or his humor, one can only say, paraphrasing Burns,

> Let me whisper in your lug,
> Ye've aiblins nane yoursel';

for the humor in both the writing and the conversation of Mr. Burroughs was always nudging one; and one need not be argus-eyed to see the wit.

Thoreau was always making a dead set at Nature, while Burroughs was more content to come upon her shy reserves and mysteries in more indirect ways. As the latter said, Thor-

eau's bow was always taut, and he sent his arrows high and far. He allowed himself no indifferent or careless moment, while Burroughs needed much time to lie fallow; needed at times to fold his hands and let some things be borne in upon him. Both men invited their souls, Thoreau scorning to loaf during the process, while Burroughs most invited his when most he loafed; for, observer that he was, he was equally absorber. Much as he saw with his eyes, he saw more with heart and imagination. He bathed in Nature as in a sea. He studied objects for their meaning in the scheme of things, though intent upon seeing them just as they are. Hence he gives so much more than a mere report of Nature. Like the walker he describes (and here Thoreau and Burroughs were more akin), the rocks spoke to him of more than geology, the birds of more than ornithology, the flowers of more than botany. Yet he was never, as was Thoreau, looking for the bird behind the bird; he aimed to present the real bird on the bough, and to interpret its song — to make it sing, not only to the ear, but to the heart.

'I confess I can't lay siege to Nature as Thoreau did,' Mr. Burroughs once said. 'He walked in all seasons. Walking was his occupation, his religion. He gave the wood-gods no rest — was before their shrines at all hours; and he could make the most of nothing of any man I ever read — he would take a page or two to tell of a leaf falling into a lake.'

What an indefatigable observer and chronicler was Thoreau! He was obsessed with observation. His long lists, his measurements and statistics are a weariness to the reader. Why this tiresome accuracy where no one cares a fig for accuracy? For example, one can't for the life of him get enthusiastic over the number of stumps in Tommy Wheeler's meadow, their respective girths, how many feet they are sawed off from the ground, and the number of rings in each stump. To what end? He was not a measuring-worm, doomed to pace his way up and down and around and across those stumps.

But when he flings to the winds his notebook, and revels in the 'forceful expression' at which he aimed when not playing Paul Pry with Nature, how he delights one! We are tickled with his paradoxes, exaggerations, and half-truths. We like well his uncertainty when he says that a slight sound he hears of an evening may be in Uranus, or it may be in the shutter.

What shall we think of his accuracy as an observer when we find him mistaking the great blue heron, first for Ellery Channing, and then for a maiden in a bathing-suit? If we followed him blindly in his ornithological ramblings, we should find ourselves in the ditch with him and the blue heron; but he would doubtless look on unmoved at our plight and taunt us with 'What of it? Yonder lies the Milky Way.'

Perhaps largely because Burroughs refused to live strenuously, but rather stayed his haste and made delays, he was able to round out his life to almost four and eighty years. Thoreau lived till only four and forty, though, of course, other factors enter here. One contrasts the work they left behind: twenty-seven books by Burroughs, two by Thoreau. For only 'Walden,' and 'A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers' were published in Thoreau's lifetime; the other volumes in his collected writings having been compiled from his Journals and letters and from published papers, lectures, etc.

Thoreau was a ripe scholar, the product of hereditary and environmental culture. He sprinkled his page with Latin terms and classical quotations. Burroughs, as we know, received no apparent impetus to learning from heredity or environment, and very meager help from the schools. He studied Latin and French during brief periods in youth, promptly forgetting most that he learned of them; and yet, in the Nation, June 2, 1881, is a review written by him of Harriet W. Preston's translation of the Georgics, which shows penetrating criticism based on first-hand acquaintance with Virgil. Again and again, in taking exception to Miss Preston's translation, he quotes the original lines, and, in other instances, points out the excellence of her interpretation over corresponding passages in other translators. However, the most of his knowledge of the classics, and it was by no means meager, was through translations.

Thoreau was ever on the trail of that which could never be found — his elusive 'night warbler,' his lost hound, and horse, and turtle dove. His mysterious 'night warbler' was one that Burroughs knew by day as well as by night. He knew its ecstatic flight-song at twilight, and its ringing, accelerating daytime chant. In his early manhood the bird had lured him through the deep woods with its call of Teacher,

Teacher, TEACHER, TEACHER! — the little oven-bird. Many a time throughout the years he had reclined upon a mossy knoll in the hemlocks and watched this pretty walker of the woods; and as an octogenarian, every spring he sought its curiously wrought nest near a sequestered path on the way to Slabsides. He had precious associations with the bird, while Thoreau, frequenting its haunts, year in and year out, never learned to identify it with its flight-song at twilight.

Thoreau's sight is said to have been more discriminating than his hearing. With Burroughs, sight and hearing were equally keen. Thoreau spied arrow-heads as easily as Burroughs spied wild strawberries hidden in the timothy. The familiar story of a friend saying to Thoreau, 'I don't see where you find your arrow-heads,' and the latter stooping and picking one up, reminds me of a similar occurrence with Burroughs. Once, when driving along a country road with Mr. Burroughs and a friend who had just begun the study of birds, the friend complained, 'Mr. Burroughs, I have never seen a red-headed woodpecker.'

'There go two of them now,' he replied, indicating the birds with his hand.

Perhaps the most striking difference between Thoreau and Burroughs was in their intimate human relations — the love of friends and family. Thoreau himself said he was 'too cold for human friendship'; that he would rather open his door to a woodchuck than to a man; that he 'could stroke and kiss the very sward, it is so fair'; and that he could love and embrace the shrub-oak more readily than he could a woman; in fact, he confessed to a positive yearning for a shrub-oak. He enjoined his friend, 'Stand off! keep away! let there be an unfathomable gulf between us — let there be wholesome hate!' Allowing for exaggeration, one sees at least circumstantial evidence of his coldness here. On the other hand, there is the testimony of Dr. Edward Emerson that Thoreau was neighborly and friendly; and of Ellery Channing that he was 'modest, mild, and kind'; and it is possible that we shall learn, in time, of warmer human attributes than the world has yet ascribed to him.

When Thoreau's brother John died, he said the death was more strange than sad to him, and that he had no wish to see John again — 'not the John that is dead'; ('Oh, Henry!

Henry!' exclaimed Mr. Burroughs on reading this confession); 'not John as he was in the flesh, but the ideal, the nobler John, of whom the real was but the imperfect representative.'

There is a world of revelation in that chiding, 'Oh, Henry! Henry!' It was a cry from out the heart of John Burroughs, who loved his kin with a tender, tolerant love, despite their shortcomings, almost because of them. And when they were gone, it was they, not some ideal conception of them, that he yearned for. A brother with whom he had camped, as Thoreau and his brother had camped on the Concord and the Merrimack, who had shared his excursions into the wild, — what poignancy that added to the loss! No thought of what the ideal brother might have been, but heavy sorrow that the real brother was forever gone from sight. That Thoreau could say he never wished to see his brother again, was beyond the comprehension of John Burroughs.

Yet there were occasions in the experiences of the latter when the more stoical Thoreau might have shone by comparison. It will be recalled how well-nigh impossible it was for Mr. Burroughs to witness the suffering of any one near to him; and that, after staying with his dying mother through the night, with the coming of the dawn he crept away to the fields like a wounded animal, there wrestling with his anguish, returning only a few minutes before she breathed her last. And there were other times in his life when, after enduring for months the sight of protracted suffering (having done his utmost to alleviate it), his fortitude failed him at the last. Perhaps in like situations Thoreau would have stood by till the end, marveling, 'Oh, John! John! could ye not have watched with them one hour more?' The weak spots in their armors were differently located, but loyal, loving hearts beat in them both.

Once when in his late years Mr. Burroughs was writing about Thoreau, he said:

> I was thinking this morning of Thoreau's way of writing, and what a mistake I have made in not heeding it. I am afraid I try to say things in too pretty a way — aim to have the page too smooth, to have it read well. I am too afraid to give the mind a jolt, which is a mistake. Thoreau doesn't care how many jolts he gives — the more the better — they add zest to the page.

And once, after rereading some of his own early essays, he said:

I wish they had a little of the Thoreau quality — that high moral and high stoical tone that I haven't got, and that makes his work nearer the classical standards. My books are pretty soft; but they are mine. I am a soft man, easily bruised, easily hurt, but getting at Nature through those very qualities of sympathy and tenderness — at least the phases of Nature which I portray.

Speaking of the essay on Walking, Mr. Burroughs pronounced it not only one of the best things that Thoreau ever wrote, but one of the best ever written on the subject.

'Better than your "Exhilarations of the Road"?'

'Yes, yes, infinitely better. It isn't just about walking. He walks into all sorts of fields — into the Promised Land — into the land of mythology, ideality, religion — while I just walk in the fields and woods.'

Still more of his comments on the differences between them are seen in the passage transcribed below, which Mr. Burroughs gave me in February, 1918:

. . . Compared with him I am soft, flexible, and adaptive, but not bracing. I am like a mellow, sweetish, pleasantly-flavored apple beside the crisp, tart, snappy Spitzenberg, which requires good teeth and crackles as you bite.

I have a greater diversity of talent than Thoreau. I cover more ground. I have more of the reflective, speculative, top-head, which is a drag on the creative, artistic faculties. Thoreau's thoughts are nearer to acts than mine. Yet I am more than his equal in powers of observation. I think I look more intently and lovingly upon the wild life about me than he did. I do not try so hard to read it as symbol as fact. . . . But Thoreau's *morale* is much superior to mine. He has the heroic strain. . . . He loved to go against the current. . . . I cannot turn my back on my fellows as he did. I am a *solitaire*, but not a hermit. . . .

I think it probable my books send people to nature more than Thoreau's do. My enjoyment is more personal and contagious. I do not take readers to nature to give them a lesson, but to have a good time. So many readers find Thoreau crabbed and repellent. His standards of taste are too high and too severe for them.

Thoreau was more poet than philosopher or scientist, Burroughs more scientist and philosopher than poet. Burroughs was keen to see resemblances, keen to detect spurious ones. He was a disinterested seeker after the truth. Thoreau was after the truth behind the truth; he loved also to dress up the commonplace in an unfamiliar garb; to try to say the unsayable. He once told a friend to expect no trivial truth from him

unless he was on the witness-stand. Still, as Burroughs said of him, since he brings the stars so near, what matter if he does magnify a will o' the wisp? If he had little use for facts, he himself was, as Burroughs slyly points out, 'an *obstinate* fact there in New England life and literature,' and, just as he was, Burroughs delighted in him; while we delight in them both.

CHAPTER XXXIII

RELIGIOUS VIEWS AND RANDOM CRITICISMS

What God is, I cannot tell,
What God is not, I know full well.
JOHN BURROUGHS

1. RELIGIOUS VIEWS

THE definition of religion given by William James, as that which one feels when in solitude to be divine, and lives up to in his experience, will probably be broadly accepted by most persons, whatever their creeds. In the solitude of his own soul Marcus Aurelius said, 'O Universe, I wish all that thou wishest.' Devout souls in all times, diversely as they have expressed themselves, have shown an essential similarity when trying to voice their sense of relation to the Infinite. 'Into thy hands I commit my spirit,' 'Thy will, not mine, be done,' 'No wind can drive my bark astray,' 'I only know I cannot drift beyond his love and care,' 'Everything is fruit to me which the seasons bring, O Nature; from thee are all things, to thee all things return.'

John Burroughs condensed a reverence like unto these in the line,

I stand amid the eternal ways.

In that poem of his early manhood ('Waiting') he unconsciously set forth his creedless creed, to which he adhered through life, the consistent elaboration of which is found in his latest utterances. His attitude toward the All, the Whole, the Eternal was that the universe is good; he accepted it, and tried to adjust himself to it, not, anthropomorphically, expecting It to adjust itself to him. In the word 'cosmos' he compressed more of reverence than do many in the word 'God.' His was the reverence of the consciously finite for the Infinite. It implied recognition of the necessity for law and order, as well as worship of their beauty. Resting securely upon the Power in which there is 'no variableness, neither shadow of turning,' he asked not that the sun stand still, that the waves recede for him, nor that any purposes of the Whole be altered

for his special benefit. His endeavor was rather to keep himself in harmonious relations with the increasing purpose running through the ages; which appoints the course of all worlds; is concerned with the inanimate as well as the animate; with the amœba no less than with man.

The same motive which caused Emerson to renounce his hereditary creed withheld John Burroughs from espousing a creed. Religion meant not less to him, but more than was contained in the articles of faith of his fathers. In Nature, which to him meant the All, Mr. Burroughs found the daily manna his soul required. He read the Bible of Creation and pondered it in his heart. Toward all created things he had that high seriousness which in itself is essentially religious. 'Whatever is, is right.' These creations could not be disputed; and as for the things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, he preferred his own guesses and searchings rather than those of which the theologians speak so dogmatically. He went from revelation to revelation, well knowing that there was one door behind which dwelt the Inscrutable, the Unknowable, the Alpha and the Omega. For light on the ageless question, 'If a man die, shall he live again?' he sought tirelessly, though knowing he must wait till death for the answer, if it *is* to be answered; or for the silence, if silence it is to be. Meanwhile, he found life sweet and beautiful in this best of all possible worlds, and was willing to trust the rest to the Powers that be.

In the revelations of science he found that which heightened and deepened his conception of the Almighty, and upon science as upon a rock, built his religion. Whatever else there might be, here were verifiable truths, worthy of all acceptation. He aimed to bring his conceptions to square with these, not to substitute his own theories, or those of others, for these facts.

He did not rest in the materialism of science. He knew there were other truths, not demonstrable by scientific methods, but apprehended in quite other ways, and he prayed for an understanding heart to keep him sensitive to such truths as well. Nevertheless, he could but repudiate all traditions and theories which run counter to established truths. In geology he found 'pages torn from the great stone book of earthly revelations'; in chemistry, a world of activities and potencies at which he marveled; in advanced physics found,

as it were, a spiritual side to matter, far transcending gross materialism. The spectroscope revealed to him wonders that made the anthropomorphism of the theologians seem puerile; and in the spectacle of the starry sky he beheld 'the Infinite baring its bosom to us, the Eternal looking directly into our eyes.'

His life was a consecration to natural truths; his devotion to Nature was his offering upon the altar of the Unknown God, the Unnamable, the Source of all that is. If he could not see in this Source a being that he could magnify in the form of his own image, and regard as an all-powerful father who takes cognizance of favored children, while letting others perish; who can be propitiated by offerings and supplications, and diverted from his plans and purposes to minister to man's special whims, he did see in the elemental laws and forces a Universal Beneficence, immanent in all things, which, in a large sense, works together for the good of all things; which has so worked, and will, from everlasting to everlasting.

With the devout Kepler, and with every other earnest seeker after truth, he thought the thoughts of God after him, so far as finite man can think them. In veneration he traced in imagination the changes which have come to our little earth since it began as a mass of incandescent matter to journey through space; saw the crust cooling and hardening; the waters, soil, and air appear; the clouds form, the rains fall; saw living things take shape in water, land, and air; traced the rise of vegetable and animal life from the simple to the complex; saw all forms arise in due course — not as sudden creations, as is figuratively expressed in Genesis, but slowly developing from lower to higher, till culminating in man. Hence it was not strange that it was not the fall of man that he believed in, but the rise of man. Then, turning in thought from our 'sun-tanned, sin-stained earth,' he saw her as a sister to the stars, riding buoyantly in the heavens, separated from the nearest star by measureless space, yet related to the farthest by the closest ties; and upheld by a power so vast it staggered him to glimpse it. Thus in all this unfolding, transforming, and continuous becoming, he saw the stately steppings of a Being so vast that to have rendered a lesser homage than that which he gave, would have seemed impious to him. His God was not 'cabined, cribbed, confined'; but was the

indwelling force in the journeying atoms, and the journeying stars; in the soul of man, and in the song of the bird.

Whitman said of Burroughs's essay 'Science and Theology': 'I have never read it. I can't get up any interest in such subjects. . . . I would rather go with John among the birds and beasts than among the parsons.' For that matter, so would 'John,' and yet there is many a passage in his works which not only takes one among the birds and beasts, but also gives a hint of what the parson is trying to teach. The following, from one of his posthumous volumes, gives something besides the singer and its song:

> . . . A little wild bird sitting on a dead branch and lifting up its voice in song, hour after hour, day after day, week after week. In terms of science we say it is a secondary sexual characteristic, but viewed in the light of the spirit of the whole, what is it except a song of praise and thanksgiving — joy in life, joy in the day, joy in the mate and brood, joy in the paternal and maternal instincts and solicitudes, a voice from the heart of Nature that the world is good; thanksgiving for the universal beneficence without which you and I and the little bird would not be here? In foul weather as in fair, the bird sings. The rain and the cold do not silence him.
>
> . . . The strain of the hermit thrush which floats down to me from the wooded heights at all hours, but more as the shades of night are falling, — what does this pure, serene, exalted strain mean but that, in Browning's familiar words,
>
> 'God's in his heaven —
> All's right with the world!'

Thus, in youth and age, he was carried on the wings of the birds a little away from the earth — yet never losing sight of it — to that 'calm, sweet solemnity one attains to in his best moments'; that 'deep, solemn joy that only the finest souls may know.'

Two seemingly opposing trends were conspicuous in his attitude to religion and life — that of the rationalist and that of the idealist. The latter was naturally uppermost in youth, but with his unusual reflective powers he had need of a rational conception of the universe; and so, though well knowing that certain truths are apprehended through the emotions, and others through the intellect, he never quite escaped being puzzled that first one instinct, then the other, had ascendancy in him. Essentially an idealist, he was ever struggling against the materialistic conception of life which science imposed.

When he wrote, the intellectual side was uppermost; but the larger part of his life was spent, not in writing, but in daily and hourly communion with the All. He gave himself up to it, bathed his spirit in it, while keeping firm hold of the objective world. His double approach to Nature was that of one

> '. . . who looks
> In steadiness, who hath among least things
> An undersense of greatest; sees the parts
> As parts, but with a feeling of the whole.'

The Gospel according to 'Saint John the Human,' is to be found throughout his works, notably in 'The Light of Day,' 'Leaf and Tendril,' 'The Breath of Life,' 'The Summit of the Years,' 'Accepting the Universe,' and 'The Last Harvest.' In these volumes are fair-minded, reverent investigations, honest doubts, scorn of superstition, impatience with blind or willful credulity, rational optimism, and a tranquil reliance upon the dispensations of the Eternal, whether scattered by one hand, or by the other; by so-called Good, or so-called Evil.

In his early essay 'Expression' he wrote, 'We are burdened with unuttered and unutterable truth'; and all his life we find him, with his deepening knowledge of the wonder and mystery of the world, striving to utter as much as could be uttered — searching, searching, and making his competent reader a sharer in the search. As reverently as reader ever turned the leaves of Holy Writ, he turned those of the book of Nature. The former he turned reverently also, but of the two, preferred the more direct revelation. Not for its cosmogony, or its history, did he read the Bible, but because, as he said, 'its morals, its ethics, its poetry, are forever true.' He never took a flippant view of any sacred thing. He cherished whatsoever things are true and lovely and of good report; honestly searched all things, and honestly tried to hold fast to that which is good. In his last book published during his life he wrote:

> Any creed that ennobles character and opens a door or a window upon the deeper meanings of this marvellous universe, is good enough to live by, and good enough to die by.

Again:

> I am convinced that no man's life is complete without some kind of an emotional experience that may be called religious. Not neces-

sarily so much a definite creed or belief, as an attraction and aspiration toward the Infinite, or a feeling of awe and reverence inspired by the contemplation of this wonderful and mysterious universe, something to lift a man above purely selfish and material ends, and open his soul to influences from the highest heavens of thought. . . .

Once in commenting upon the changes wrought by Time in our attitude toward religious problems, he wrote:

. . . Other voices are in the air, other signs are in the heavens. . . . Things are vocal to us that were silent to them [our forefathers]. Where they saw darkness, we see light; where they feared and trembled, we rejoice and admire; where they saw a jealous God, we see beneficent laws; where they saw a special providence, we see the universal bounty; where they saw as through a glass darkly, we see with corrected vision.

The real values of life are unchanged. Awe, reverence, humility, simplicity, truthfulness, self-sacrifice, fortitude, charity, obedience — all the precious jewels in the crown of manhood and womanhood — remain the same. We have lost much, we have gained more. We are more at home in the universe, the stars are nearer, the earth is more friendly . . . our minds and bodies more sacred. Our house of life has been enlarged; new and larger windows have been put into it; we have annexed more territory; we have planted more flowers; we breathe a larger air, and bathe in cleaner waters.

Another glimpse of his faith as a naturalist is seen in the following:

Communing with God is communing with our own hearts, our own best selves, not with something foreign and accidental. Saints and devotees have gone into the wilderness to find God; of course they took God with them, and the silence and detachment enabled them to hear the still, small voice of their own souls, as one hears the ticking of his own watch in the stillness of the night.

2. Random Criticisms

As a critic, John Burroughs steered by the fixed stars of literature, giving scant heed to the comets and meteors. Although he surveyed all literatures, chiefly in translations, he had little first-hand familiarity with any but the English.

The unrelated bits of criticism grouped here were mostly made by Mr. Burroughs at odd times, during the last years of his life, sometimes as he sat musing by the fire at bedtime, or as he paused in his reading; some were caught on the wing from a flock of other comments that escaped. Jotted down on scraps of paper, usually with no reminder as to what called

them forth, they are now offered as fragments worthy of preservation.

Mr. Burroughs was a sane and bold critic and sometimes a rash one. One must admit that he sometimes made extreme and unguarded statements, and that his critical indiscretions, inconsistencies, and prejudices could be shown up with damning evidence. His difficulty in escaping from first impressions hampered him; and then, with Whitman as his literary touchstone, if a writer disparaged Whitman, Whitman's disciple found it difficult to see much in that writer's work. Having admitted these limitations, one subscribes heartily to the estimate of him made by one of his correspondents, Miss Edith Brower:

> You are at your best as a critic. . . . When I read Arnold or Bagehot, or other of those gigantic critics, I always feel how great they are . . . how much they have studied, how awfully much they know about criticism. You and Charles Lamb never seem to know or care anything about criticism; you simply criticize, just as children do, mercilessly, but with no thought of being merciless, only of speaking out. Now, you're not hurt at being compared with L-L-Lamb, are you? He wouldn't have m-m-minded it.

One may not always agree with Mr. Burroughs, but one respects him for honestly stating his views. Though lacking academic training, he had something which that alone could never give. If, in his intercourse with persons, he deferred too much to them, in his critical judgments he preserved his independence. An example of the independence of his criticism is found in a letter in which he says, 'I see that —— has a criticism on Bergson's book in ——, but I haven't read it. I don't want to read it till I have written one myself.'

His taste for naturalness and simplicity made him a better judge of certain writers than of others. The lyrical poet, the discursive prose-writer, the elemental bard with a form all his own, fare better at his hands than many another writer. In his hasty judgments of Browning, Henry James, Walter Pater, Dickens, and Thackeray, he showed but little of the penetrating insight that characterizes most of his critical work.

In the following fragment is seen the critic with eye turned in upon himself:

> If my writings have any of the freshness which many readers and critics profess to find in them, the secret is that my apprehension of

the birds, of a scene, of the open air, or what not, is not in the first instance a literary or scholastic one, but a real, personal one. I do not run after the birds in order to write about them, but in order to enjoy them, and to satisfy a natural thirst for them; and I never know till after it is over that I am 'like,' as the women say, for an article.

This is another way of saying what he often said, 'You must have the bird in your heart before you can find him in the bush.' He thought it a poor plan to make a dead set at writing. Anent his narrative of the Alaskan expedition he said:

They made me go about it deliberately, to get 'like' for a book. That is not my way. I go to Nature for love of her and the book follows, or not, as the case may be. (This metaphor seems suddenly inverted, but you will understand.) There are a few good descriptive passages in the book, and that is about all.

One of his maxims was, 'Write what you feel, not merely what you think. What one feels is vital to him.' As interesting as his estimate of books was that of personal qualities. He said of a certain friend, 'She is good as a bit of nature is good — an apple, a peach, a strawberry, not from will so much as from an essential, innate quality.'

Of Bacon's richness of aphorism:

He puts things in such concrete shape — but a good deal is chaff, or is superfluous now.

His sense of values is glimpsed here:

Any thought that strikes freshly and strongly one of the great human notes, as love, honor, humanity, is good literature.

A book that doesn't add to my love of the world or my better understanding of it, is of but passing interest to me. I read many books that don't do this, but read them merely for diversion — they don't become a part of me.

Longfellow had human feeling, sterling good sense, high ethical standards, genuine imaginative powers. These give him a permanent position among American poets. He was not a great poet, but a generous one.

Alcott was always like moonshine to me — no warmth or substance. I know Emerson valued him highly but —

I would rather have one stanza of Emerson than all Poe ever dreamed. Poe is all verbal felicity — there's a lilt to it but — look

at his 'Bells,' and his 'Raven,' — wonderful craftsmanship — only this and nothing more.

How often it turns out that a man's lesser works eclipse those he sets his heart upon! Wordsworth is not remembered for his long, ambitious 'Excursion,' or 'The White Doe of Rylston,' but for such short lyrics as 'The Daffodils,' 'The Cuckoo,' 'The Poet's Epitaph.' Bayard Taylor is remembered, not for his philosophical poems, 'Prince Deukalion,' and 'The Masque of the Gods,' but that lyric inspired by an event in the Crimean War ['Song of the Camp'] will keep his memory green.

Poe was sure his 'Eureka' eclipsed all his other contributions to literature; but who reads 'Eureka' now? Lewis Carroll's serious works lie buried in mathematical tomes, but 'Alice in Wonderland' is a household word. And Darwin's 'Voyage of the Beagle' will outlast all his other books — at least, it will be far more widely read. I have read it at least three times, and am always dipping into it.

Wordsworth was in many ways a man after my own heart. He had the religious sentiment and the sense of the mystery of things — prosy at times, at others divine. I should like to have seen him and walked with him [wistfully]. Emerson saw him — twice, I think [musingly].

Hogg once said something about 'we poets.' '*We* poets!' echoed Wordsworth contemptuously. — Poor Hogg!

Some one once showed Wordsworth Milton's watch, and Wordsworth took out his own watch and held it aloft! He wasn't all humility — any more than I am. I went to his grave at Grasmere — saw the water-ouzel there, dipping in the water.

One evening he commented on Dorothy Wordsworth writing in her Journal, 'William left us to seek the waterfalls,' adding, 'He was a great lover of waterfalls'; and then, quoting:

'The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep,'

he said, 'That is a great line — in his immortal ode. Emerson said it was the high-water mark of English literature.

Again he repeated with emotion,

'The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep.'

He then repeated other passages from this ode, adding enthusiastically, 'Wordsworth at his best — its inevitableness! His poems are like a product of Nature — they grew.'

During his last sojourn in California, Mr. Burroughs penciled these lines in my copy of Wordsworth:

One thing that distinguishes the work of a first-class poet, like Wordsworth, from the mass of second-rate and third-rate poets, is this: he deals with concrete things. His pages are full of real objects and their relations, not mere fancies or sentiments, or vague longings, or vapory refinements, but solid reality. No subtleties or over-refinements in Wordsworth.

One evening, referring to revelations recently come upon in the early life of Wordsworth, he said:

I always wondered how in the world he could write such good poems if he was as 'good' as they said he was. That was one thing Emerson lacked, — he couldn't be 'wicked,' — and Tennyson, too. Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey,' and his 'Ode to Immortality' are jewels of the first water. Tennyson is rich and sumptuous, but his verses are mostly of the aristocracy with their manor halls and moated grange and ivy casements — profound, elegant, beautiful, but not close to the ground. They don't feed or stimulate you, or bring you close to the world in which you live. Lord! read Shakespeare for that!

Taking up a large volume of the complete Wordsworth, he said:

A man who can come down the stream of time with *that* around his neck — it's a wonder it didn't swamp him! His moral weight, combined with his poetic buoyancy — these made him great; but often and often there is only dull, heavy moralizing.

On one of his trips across the Mojave desert, he made this comment:

Literature is always truth plus a man, or a play of personality added to a play of mind. Every true writer gives us his truth. The truth of Arnold, of Goethe, will not be that of Macaulay or of Hugo. The truth of Emerson will not be that of a more prosy and matter-of-fact writer, like Whipple or Tuckerman. A great writer does not give us greater truths, but greater power to see truth — his truth.

At the Nest, one evening, after reading aloud some of the poems of Matthew Arnold, and speaking of their lasting quality, he said that Arnold had written some of the best love poems in English literature, but that curiously enough, Emerson did not value highly Arnold's poetry:

They [Arnold's poems] are too sad; but there has been no poet since Wordsworth to compare with him. Wordsworth was more the voice of pure Nature, Arnold's of culture, and an old, old civilization, as was Tennyson's — still, his was of a far different order.

Arnold's mind, he said, was a wonderfully lucid one — 'There was the least confusion in his head of any man of his time.' He then quoted Arnold's lines on his cat:

'So Tiberius might have sat,
Had Tiberius been a cat,'

and added:

Arnold's animal poems are among the finest in literature. They show emotion, and a vast background. . . . I read them with tears, — my own cats and dogs have been so loved.

Of 'In Memoriam':

A good deal of it is first-rate, some second-rate, and there are immortal stanzas in it.

Speaking then of 'Two Voices,' 'The Days that are no More,' 'The Brook,' he said,

Tennyson puts emotion in words of the simplest kind in an inimitable fashion. . . . He is the outcome of ripe culture, high civilization, leisure, wealth. Mellow England speaks in him as in no other English poet. How fine is his poem to 'Old Fitz'!

After reading Coleridge and speaking of his 'always suggestive and marvelous mind' he added:

Had he lived in our time, his mind would not have moved in the leading-strings of ecclesiastical religion, as it did then. He would have had more science and less theology. His learned exposition of the cause of malarial disease — how amusing! . . . but that was the science of his time — bad air from swamps caused ague, etc.!

Concerning James Martineau:

A thin, fine spirit. I heard him in London; his sermon was a theological essay. As I looked at his audience I wondered if his talk didn't go over the heads of all of them. *I* had to stretch up to get it — a fine spirit, but he confounded the subjective with the objective.

He said of Mr. Havelock Ellis:

I can't read him. He writes well, but he doesn't write *well enough*. It is not compelling as science, or literature — a kind of weak solution of both.

Howells said that Whitman had more poetry in him than he ever got out.

A man who doesn't see in Whitman the cerulean heights and the cosmic depths, the antique, the classic, the poet's soul — that is all I want to know of him. . . . Higginson — who is he? A thin veneer of learning, culture, and manners. If he had been of solid oak, he would have recognized Whitman's worth. He *did* come a little nearer to it toward the last.

William Vaughn Moody has done some things of their kind better than any other American poet. He was not Whitmanesque at all, but could see greatness where it was. *He* recognized Whitman's greatness.

Traubel, with all his talk, doesn't see Whitman — only his democratic side, and his comradeship. I don't believe he has any conception of his greatness, or it would show more in his own life and work.

Nothing but words of soberness and truth really last, and [Robert] Buchanan wrote very few of those. He was clever, — had quite a vogue forty years ago, — but he did not seem deeply anchored to the eternal verities.

Nearly all the well-known poets of his [Whitman's] time — Lowell, Aldrich, Stoddard, Taylor, Winter — repudiated him. If their poetry can stand the test of time as well as Walt's has, they were not disqualified to judge him. A poet must earn his right to deny the poetic gift of Whitman by having produced some great poetry himself. If he has *one* great line to his credit, I can forgive him. *But he will not have* . . . [he who denies the poetic gift to Whitman]

If Walt had seen Traubel's 'damns' he would have struck them out. He did not use them half as much as I do. I am lavish of mine. Walt would have struck out a good deal of Traubel's book, but Traubel — I won't waste a 'damn' on him — put everything in. Think of his telling that Walt called —— —— 'an old hag'! Walt would have said, 'Lord! strike that out — if I ever said it!' If Traubel could have discriminated, he would have made a wonderful contribution. In some places in his book, I can almost hear Walt breathe. He has the gift of taking the moment on the wing — *but he puts in so much!* His Collect in the Conservator — a watery flux of sentiment and socialism — words, words, words!

Once when Walt got hard up, James T. Fields gave me one hundred, or two hundred, dollars to give him. There has been a good deal made of what was done for Walt; and yet they gave Aldrich, and Howells, and Sarah Orne Jewett purses of $5000, and *they* didn't need it.

Walt had Eddie, his imbecile [epileptic] brother to provide for, and was always fearing Eddie would be neglected after his death. And that tomb they've made such a fuss about — that wasn't built for himself alone — all his family are buried there; and I guess if the truth were known, very little of his own money went to pay for it. Harned could tell some things about that, if he would. Walt fell into the hands of some unscrupulous men — the tomb was not supposed to be a costly one. I suspect Harned, and a few others, met

that cost, and never let Walt know the truth about it, for fear of worrying him. . . .

Mr. Burroughs found a line in one of his birthday gifts (1919), that pleased him much — from the 'Spoon River Anthology' — 'Homer and Whitman roaring in the pines.' Of the book itself he wrote in his Journal:

Read half an hour in Masters' 'Spoon River Anthology.' Good stuff in it, but no great poetry; no great thoughts, but humor, pathos, sympathy. These younger, free-verse poets have been influenced by Whitman, but are not to be named the same day with him — no power, no grandeur, nothing elemental or cosmic. The trick of it all tires one after awhile. I learn nothing new; I love nothing more; I am brought no nearer nature, or the Infinite. No music, no rhythm, as in Whitman. It is good 'shredded prose,' and not good verse.

Norton was not a strong man, but was an admirable one. He was a radical. He had too big, full eyes; but he had sweet manners; was full of anecdotes and wise things; had known many eminent men — was eminent himself.

Channing's 'Poem of the Earth' is a great poem — I must hunt that up. That is a great line,

'If my bark sink, 'tis to a deeper sea.'

Aldrich's poems are like spiders' webs, — very delicately and artfully woven, real, but tenuous, and hardly capable of arresting a serious mind. Their intellectual content is of the slightest character. Their only excuse for being is their extreme artistic cleverness.

Browning's cleverness and his many-faceted mind were, Mr. Burroughs confessed, too much for him, though he recognized his power:

It is like riding over a rough road; he fairly makes me bite my tongue sometimes; and yet, 'How They Brought the Good News,' is one of the most powerful things I have read in any literature.

I wish I could share your love for Browning, but I cannot, though I have tried hard. No, I have never read 'The Ring and the Book'; life is too short — and sweet.

A sonnet is a noble thing, but it is architectural. Whitman's form is not architectural, except in a few minor instances — it is the form of living things.

A sonnet is, as rule, too artificial — all but the great sonnets. It has to conform too much to prescribed rules. To be satisfactory every line should contain concentrated thought; but most sonnets

have to contain lines to meet the exigencies of the sonnet's form. Every cell should be full of honey — no empty ones.

'What do you think of Mrs. Browning's "Sonnets from the Portuguese?"'

'I have never read them.'

'Really?'

'Really' [shamefacedly].

On listening to some of them, the tears stood in his eyes, and he said in a tremulous voice, 'Eloquent, eloquent — Shakespearean!'

'No,' protesting, 'they are *hers*.'

'Well, you associate them with her — I see how you have read them — but I have no such associations. Somehow, I never got interested in her — but these — ah!' and he took the book and read on and on, saying later: 'I must have these — they must be printed separately — I must have them to read when by myself, at twilight.'

Later:

These were written out of her heart. They are her life. Now, if she had written them without having felt all this, that would be great poetry — that would be the highest art — to have given the reader the impression of having lived it, when she had not.

Among other unrelated fragments on a time-stained sheet, the handwriting apparently that of the eighteen-eighties or nineties, is the passage which follows, the even momentary consideration given to the poems of Will Carlton in itself showing that it was written long ago:

When one asks himself what it is that makes a true poem, a lasting poem, how many things arise, how hard to narrow the list down to a few. How many beautiful poems one reads that he never thinks of afterward. The world is full of fine poems that count not at all. They are *made* poems, not vital things that grew. The singer has a thought, a conceit, a simile — he will make a poem of it, something artistic and pleasing. Real feeling and emotion are not first; but a literary itching and desire. He tries to induce the feeling by words; hopes the cage will capture the bird.

The fire came down and consumed Elisha's offering because he was sincere. Plan and build your poem never so deftly, mankind will not permanently care for it unless it has one thing — genuine feeling. That is, it must be impassioned. Yes, it must have another thing: it must be related to the common everyday currents of human life — must touch the common chords of life.

The minor poets all simulate feeling, force the feeling; they make very free with their bleeding hearts, but we quickly know whether their hearts really bleed.

And yet, are not Will Carlton's poems impassioned, and do they not touch universal chords? The feeling is shallow — really no intensity or depth. Burns has both. If one names but two indispensable things, he must say passion and universality.

Commenting on his own poetry, he likened it to the machine-like flight of the flying-fish as compared with the flight of a bird, — no freedom, no mastery, no power to soar — a creature out of its proper element. One day he handed me the subjoined comments, saying, 'For your book — if you can use it':

I think I can see that the purely art poet, like Poe or Aldrich, or the French poets, would not care for my 'Waiting.' The poem is too realistic, too much a matter of conviction, and of religious emotion, they would say. It was not born of the art impulse, the desire to carve out some beautiful thing, but is more a matter of temperament, and the desire for spiritual consolation. It does not minister to the esthetic faculties so much as it cheers and stimulates our sense of the mystery and the significance of life.

One of the magazine editors [H. M. Alden] rejected my poem 'The Return,' because the *motif* was too commonplace. It did not have the stamp of an artistic creation, which is true. None of my verses have. They are less the product of the imagination than of the heart and the perceptive faculties. Purely art poets, like Poe, are few. We have not another, unless Aldrich be such. Emerson was far from it, as was Whittier. Lowell, again, comes nearer it. Milton is the master type of the art poet, who was the least indebted to personal emotions, experiences, and temperament. Wordsworth, again, could sing only what he had felt and lived; he sang out of the fullness of his personal love of Nature. How different is Milton's feigning from Wordsworth's conviction! Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner' is an art poem. So are the best things of Keats and Shelley.

I admire the art poets, but do not love them. Wordsworth's poetry is far more to me than Milton's; and yet I see it is not so purely a work of the imagination. It is written to me, and Milton's is not. In either case, it is only when a great personality is felt through the verse that a deep impression is made. Our minor poets are artistic; but the great personalities are not there.

Other fragments of criticism are as follows:

I was recently reading a volume of verse by a Western poet, describing life and nature in one of the great trans-Mississippi States. It was extremely well done, vivid and truthful and flawless in its

versification; but I was forced to say to myself, 'This is not poetry; it is good prose thrown into verse form.' It did not have the indispensable element of all true poetry, namely, some sort of philosophy, or universal significance that brings it home to all men; or, perhaps I may say, that brings it home to the soul. Mere description can never make a poem, no matter how well done. A poem that has no philosophical background, or tap-root that strikes down to the deeper substratum of life, is not truly a poem.

Our literature is flooded more and more by what is called nature poetry, but it is for the most part merely embroidery of pretty fancies upon nature themes. I say this of my own verse, as well as of that of my neighbors. Let me particularize. The body of my 'Bird and Bough' is simply good rhymed natural history. There is much more truth than poetry in it.

Only one of my poems, 'Waiting,' has a philosophy. It has gone round the world, and it is its philosophy that has carried it around. Its trust in absolute Nature makes its appeal all the more effective. It is not in any sense didactic; its philosophy is held in solution, as it were; is in the blood and will, and mantles in its lines as blood should. Some over-pious and anemic soul in New England printed what he meant to be an improved version of it. He added this stanza, in place of my last one:

> 'Serene, I fold my hands and wait,
> What e'er the storms of life may be;
> Faith guides me up to heaven's gate,
> And Love will bring my own to me.'

Thus he gave the touch which I had carefully avoided giving. Theological cant can never take the place of 'Nature's primal sanities.'

Of John Muir:

Charley Eldridge said that Muir's style is 'too adjectivorous.' He is right. Muir works the word 'glorious' too hard, and all his streams sing psalms; but he felt the call of the mountains as the old saints and hermits felt the call of the desert. The mountains stamped his spirit. You see it in that faraway look in his eyes; but that nose of his sniffs nothing but glaciers.

Speaking of 'Vanity Fair,' he said he had never read it — would rather have 'Little Billee.'

'But you like Scott?'

'Scott, oh, yes — *he's* a horse of another color.'

He sometimes inveighed against the 'ugly realism' of a contemporary writer of fiction whose account of life as a farm-boy was too little redeemed by ideality. '——has one scene of epic grandeur in his book, but he gives us too much of the sordid

in farm life; his book smells of the stable; the manure sticks to his boots — even in Boston.'

Of Henry James's 'Journey in France' he complained, 'What can be less interesting than minute descriptions of towns and cities one has never seen?'

One evening after reading Professor Phelps's review of Henry James's posthumous works, he said:

It is well done, but I think he gives James too high praise. A thread of gold may get itself tangled up just as much as a thread of cotton, so you won't know the beginning, middle, or end; and that's the way many passages of James are. You look in vain for the idea to come out. To me it is often mere words, words tangled up. Many of his passages are tangles of good English, but they are tangles just the same, and therefore unprofitable. . . . He is the artistic and literary spirit utterly gone to seed. He doesn't dare say white is white, or black, black, for fear it wouldn't be artistic. . . .

Concerning Emerson:

We do not, in any of Emerson's essays or letters, get very close to the real facts and conditions of life. We do not breathe the atmosphere of concrete things, though concrete things so often serve him for verb and noun. The breath of the earth, of the fields, of the woods, of the shore, of the street, we do not breathe. Just as he could not *meet* other people in the flesh, so he could not touch them in the spirit. There is a gulf, a strangeness, in the mind. Even his Humble-Bee and his Titmouse are transcendental creatures. His letters are almost as impersonal as his essays. The most concrete of philosophers, and yet the most abstract of poets and essayists, always trying to wed his thought to a thing or a fact — aiming to hitch his star to a wagon — yet no writer of such power and genius is so little of the earth, earthy.

In my copy of 'Walden' I find an annotation which Mr. Burroughs made and dated, April 20, 1917, 'This book is undoubtedly the most readable bit of brag to be found in English literature.' He often said he envied Thoreau his trenchant style. 'I am a tamer critter. I am not subject to the planetary perturbations he was.'

Of Moncure Conway:

He was a prolific essayist. Once active as a Methodist, later as a Unitarian clergyman, he finally edited the works of Thomas Paine. He was not always reliable in what he wrote; he drew the long bow; a picturesque statement, even though wanting in truth, was too much of a temptation to him. Imagine Walt's lying on the ground and trying to look the sun out of countenance, as Conway said!

Quoting John Muir concerning a writer much in vogue in the West at one time, Mr. Burroughs applied the remark to a certain nature writer whose work he had himself generously estimated (until the man began to write things 'that wouldn't go down') — '"Beware of a *reformed* minister — his reformation doesn't always extend to his fidelity to the truth."'

One morning (1918) Mr. Burroughs dictated the following criticism of Howells:

He is our best literary craftsman. His technique is perfect, and he is master of nearly all forms of literary expression — the story, the play, the essay, the poem, and criticism. In all these fields his technique is as sure as human touch can well be. Of course this is not saying that he ranks with the great poets and dramatists, it only emphasizes his remarkable cleverness, skill, and versatility. He is not a great nature. The intellectual content of his work is rather meagre. Outside certain limits he carries little weight. For instance, the best he could say about Walt Whitman was that he probably had more poetry in him than he ever succeeded in getting out of him, whereas Tennyson would have told him that Whitman was the only poet that America had produced.

After dinner the same day he said:

I think I wa'n't quite fair to Howells this morning. In some of his novels, for example 'The Rise of Silas Lapham,' he undoubtedly shows an unusual degree of creative imagination.

Some days later:

In my talk about Howells the other day I did not mean to give you the impression that I regarded him merely as a technical literary expert. He is much more than that. In some of his novels he shows a high degree of creative imagination. He is the most complete all-round literary craftsman we have ever had; but he is not a great nature; not so great as Hawthorne. He could do nothing like 'The Scarlet Letter.' He has not the moral depth and grandeur; but it is greatly to his credit that he recognizes the greatness of Tolstoy, though he fails to do justice to Thackeray, Dickens, and Scott.

His travel sketches I get little from. His 'London Films' I could not read half through, it is so filmy — the mere skin of things, yet done with all his felicity of style.

Still later:

How clever Mr. Howells is, how skilful! how delightful his style! . . . He makes me admire his delicacy and deftness, his lightness and sureness of touch, but he does not make me love anything he portrays. I do not want to meet the people he pictures, nor see the

places he describes, nor read the books he discusses, nor take the journeys he takes. He cannot give himself, he can only give you his talent. He lacks heartiness, breadth, richness — the fundamental human traits and qualities. His work is often photographic, and lacks just what the photo lacks — the man is not in it.

Among his many enthusiastic comments on Woodrow Wilson is the following:

Probably for beauty of style no such state papers and speeches as President Wilson's were ever before written by any ruler in the world, past or present. They are unique. They are not rhetorical or oratorical. There is no effort after effect. They are as easy and natural as breathing and walking, and yet they stand alone as official utterances. Simple, direct, lucid, familiar, they yet have an atmosphere all their own. No overstatement, no empty words, not what we call literary; they do not give one a sense of the polished or the studied; but there is an inevitable smoothness and harmony about them that is like Nature's own work. It is quality, and not mere craftsmanship that distinguishes them.

Another written fragment runs thus:

How many masters of the uninteresting we have all known, — in society, in the pulpit, on the lecture platform, in editorial chairs, on the stage, on shipboard, in books, in magazines, everywhere! One called upon me this morning — a lady who thought her life would be as interesting to me as it was to her. It was not. She was not an interesting person herself, but very commonplace; and the details of her life which she laid before me had no more special significance than she herself had. Had she been interesting herself, her reminiscences might have been interesting.

An original person is always interesting — some for what they know, some for what they don't know — provided they have the spice of character. Insipidity in all forms soon tires us. I once had an old neighbor who could neither read nor write, yet he always interested me. He firmly believed that perpetual motion was possible, and the standing job for his leisure moments was working on a machine that would prove it. He did not believe that the earth is round, or that it turns round; and could prove his points to his own satisfaction with his builder's level upon the floor. In Florida I met persons associated in a community who taught that we are living on the inside of a hollow sphere, and that our astronomy is all false. It was interesting to hear the exposition of their doctrines, and see how they fooled themselves. It was a good study in the psychology of those who fall a victim to words; but one soon tires of the perversity of dreams.

I was once confined on shipboard with a large company of fine people, among whom were several college professors — all learned

men, but, oh, so uninteresting! One of them, especially, we grew to dread. He would get one in a corner and turn on the hose of his encyclopædic knowledge, almost deluging his victim. How I used to chuckle when I escaped, and saw some one else coralled as he opened upon him the flood-gates of his class-room knowledge, till the poor fellow was nearly suffocated by the inundation!

Of Darwin:

Self-deception is not infrequent among all classes of men, especially as to the relative value of one's work. Poe is a good example among literary men. He wrote a long dissertation upon some philosophical problem which he thought was the piece of work he would finally be remembered by. Probably not one in a thousand of his readers ever turn to it. Darwin is a case among scientific men. He evidently fancied that in his selection theories he had solved the problem of the origin of species, and that that was his master contribution to the science of biology. We know now that natural selection is not a creative, but a weeding-out process, and plays but a negative part in the origin of species; and that Darwin's chief contribution is that he taught us to think of the organic world in terms of evolution. The character of the man, his candor, his sincerity, his love of truth, and his example of patient, tireless inquiry, are a precious heritage to all mankind. His record of his travels in the Beagle will probably outlast all his other books. As the voyage of a naturalist it has no rival. Nothing is more precious in the literature of science than a personal narrative of observations by a competent observer. The seed corn of all his subsequent writing and theories is here.

There are some things I wish I could have told Darwin about — that a bird with a defective instrument will sing as joyously as a bird with a perfect one. An old rooster we had that could hardly get out a crow would crow defiantly at the neighbors' roosters — but *such* a crow! — and I remember a bobolink that could scarcely be heard, that *would try* to sing. These facts I should like to have communicated to Darwin, — they would confute his theory that the males do this to please the females. The same with the gay plumes, etc. You know I contend these are merely the excess of the male principle — of no direct use. The females don't care. There's nothing in sexual selection and natural selection; it's simply that the male is positive, and so has the brilliant plumage and the song.

Darwin and his followers won't admit that an inherent tendency to progress is part of the scheme of the universe, of Nature, or God — whatever you choose to call it.

Darwin — so human, so modest, so genuine — one loves him out and out. One wouldn't think of loving Spencer, or Mill. I would as soon think of loving a bushel of sawdust. Darwin had an eye single to the truth. If facts upset his theories, he would let the theories go and start over again.

[Journal] January 29, 1919. Re-reading Huxley. A keen, penetrating mind, the knight in shining armor of the Darwin theory. The way Huxley can 'sass back'; the way his irony can bite and blister; the way he can dispel fog and illusion is a wonder. No other writer of his time, or fore-time, on scientific subjects was so immanent in his work, so clearly and vividly before his reader. Clear as crystal is his page, and with a distinction like cut glass. He is brilliant, he is logical, he is imaginative, he is sane and sure, he is rhetorical, he is solid, he is a moral teacher, and he is a trained scientist. A brilliant, but not a profound mind.

Among his posthumous papers are the following comments on certain poets, dated February 24, 1918:

A great many persons, hundreds, yes, thousands, have a talent for poetry who have no genius. Probably not one in a hundred who write verse and publish volumes of it have any genius for poetry. They have an acquired facility, and not the inborn passion.

I myself have written some verses that have gone around the world, but I have not a spark of poetic genius. Whatever genius I have, if I have any, comes out in my prose.

Our vast army of young poets show only talent for the most part; only now and then does one see in their work a spark of the divine fire. One of our women poets, 'Florence Percy,' had great skill in versification, but was always under the spell of tearful retrospective moods, and a woman's moods at that. I knew her well in the old Washington days. She had wit — wit of the lance and arrow kind — but little of the kindly, tolerant kind.

Of our major poets, few of them show any real poetic genius. Bryant, our eldest, showed it in such a poem as the 'Water Fowl.' No degree of talent could do that. I should not say that Whittier ever quite breathed the air of pure poetic genius, or that Lowell ever did. Lowell's brilliancy is always the brilliancy of prose. He had a great literary talent, but it never lifted him into the true poetic plane. Emerson, of course, had poetic genius, almost an embarrassment of it. He once said to Channing, 'If I wrote as well as you do, I should write a good deal better.' One might have said to Emerson, 'If I had as much poetry in me as you have, I would write much better poetry.' But a few of his poems — 'The Snow-Storm,' 'Seashore,' the 'Song of Nature,' the 'Boston Hymn,' the Concord Bridge poem, and 'Each and All,' and a few others — are sure to last, I think, — the only New England poetry that is greater than New England.

Longfellow had a gentle poetic genius, but he did not rise to the higher poetic altitudes. What shall we say of Poe? Certainly that he had genius, of a sort, but not of the more precious kind. His verbal and rhythmic feats are certainly unique. He was a born acrobat in verse. I do not think there is anything more than fine talent in Aldrich and Winter. The only streak of genius I see in Stedman

is in the Osawatomie Brown poem. There is genius. Gilder wrote much good verse, many musical poems. He was a fine and rare spirit of the Shelley kind, but he lacked body and depth. His facility outran his inspiration.

Oh, that poetic leaven which makes lively or buoyant the commonest facts of life — how precious and rare it is! I have just been reading the Life of FitzGerald and was struck afresh with his poetic gifts. Here was a true poet who wrote but little poetry. He had that divine something that sets prosaic things dancing and singing. Or turn to Keats for a full measure of the same thing. How the flight of the swallow differs from that of the sparrow!

I read the Life of Pope at the same time. Here was a rare genius for prose, but of poetry in the high sense not a line. Nor a line in Scott, in the sense here implied. But what a harvest in Burns!

CHAPTER XXXIV

'OLD AGE SUPERBLY RISING'

1919–1920

As life wanes, and all the turbulent passions calm,
As gorgeous, vapory, silent hues cover the evening sky,
As softness, fullness, rest, suffuse the frame, like fresher, balmier air,
As the days take on a mellower light, and the apple at last hangs really
finish'd and indolent-ripe on the tree,
Then for the teeming, quietest, happiest days of all!
The brooding and blissful halcyon days!

WHITMAN

ON emerging from the shadow of the World War, Mr. Burroughs faced forward hopefully, not by shutting his eyes to the fact that the sun was low on the horizon, but by opening them wider, the more clearly to see how to make the most of the waning hours. As a septuagenarian he had, as it were, adopted the boast of Montaigne, 'Let the years haul me along if they will, but it shall be backward.' He had enjoyed a long Indian summer before the winter of age set in. If, with Emerson, he had found that a daily walk in the woods is one of the secrets of dodging old age, when he entered the ranks of the octogenarians, he decided to make the best of it; and, *en rapport* with Emerson in age, as in youth, he echoed:

'As the bird trims her to the gale,
I trim myself to the storm of Time.'

Accordingly, at four score and onward he entered into a calm, but still fruitful, period well suited to his tastes and habit of mind; and arranged conditions conducive to the accomplishment of whatever work remained for him. In his leisurely climb to the summit of life he adopted the same methods he had instinctively followed when climbing earth's mountains —

'I stay my haste, I make delays';

he had paused by the way, gleaning in the valleys as well as on the heights; lingering to feel the grass under his feet; to harken to the songs of birds, and the hum of the wind; to pluck a flower and inhale its fragrance; and to taste the ripe berries along his path; so now, from the vantage-ground of a ripe old age, he paused to get a new insight into the meaning and pur-

pose of life; a clearer sense of its values; a wider perspective of its processes, relations, and evolutions. His had been a life in which the senses had had a full measure of enjoyment; in which the dignity of the body, exquisitely attuned to its environment, had shared the elevation of the soul; and now, as the years increased, despite the inevitable physiological and psychic decline, he retained to a remarkable degree the activity, vigor, curiosity, and receptivity that had characterized his youth; so that, even to the last, one could say of him, as has been said of another, 'It is fine, isn't it, when a light burns so clear down to the socket?'

He sometimes quoted Sainte-Beuve to the effect that old age was the best means he had found for living a long time; and one of his own maxims was: 'The art of growing old is largely the art of right living carried into old age. The passing years should bring proficiency in the art.'

From eighty onward he deliberately busied himself, as his nonagenarian friend Candace Wheeler said she did, with growing old. Attributing his length of days largely to his keen enjoyment of health, and to his quickness to detect anything wrong with himself, whenever the least film appeared over his sense of well-being, he did not rest until he had ferreted out the cause, and applied the remedy. Quite a different attitude, this, from the hypochondriac's — he enjoyed good health so keenly that he was impatient with anything less. Watchfulness over his health, however, which began in his sixties, and increased with the years, did, toward the last, occupy rather too much attention, at times even taking a hypochondriacal tinge. Because of the necessity to cater to his lowered digestive function, he became something of a dietetic expert, and was, on the whole, wiser than any physician in ministering to himself; but he often wearied of the necessary vigilance and self-denial. At one time he became so concerned about the (self-diagnosed) inadequacy of his ileocœcal valve that he seriously asked if it were likely he could survive an operation for its removal. One sometimes had to resort to banter to help him regain a sense of proportion; and to combat his undue contemplation of his ileocœcal valve by suggesting that he originate a competition with the Oriental navel-gazers. It was, however, no laughing matter when he neglected the hygiene of the alimentary tract, though it was regrettable that attention to it came to assume

quite so conspicuous a place as it did in later years. Still his absorption with the function of nutrition was but the normal regression to the pre-sexual stage, when nutrition is the all-important function of the organism. The wonder is that, hampered as he was with nutritional problems, and with myocardial and renal inadequacy, he managed to retain his keen appetite for work, and to keep all gloom and pessimism out of his books.

Despite all efforts to encourage a little wholesome indifference on his part as to whether or not his food would agree with him, many were the whims and food fads he espoused; many the substitutes for tea, coffee, and cocoa. He read Metchnikoff, and had his time of pitting the 'Little Bulgars' against intestinal invaders; read many books on dietetics; studied colon hygiene; corresponded with Dr. Russell H. Chittenden, submitting his dietary for suggestions. For a time he laid great stress upon Dr. E. V. McCollum's theories (several years before the vitaminic quest became a fad with the public). He fancied he could not tolerate milk or buttermilk, but tried various allied preparations. Milk made from almonds was long a favorite. With uncooked wafers, rye-crisps, various biscuits; with bran and a host of other adjuncts, he sought aid for his aging organs. Sometimes he placed himself in the hands of a *masseur*, and basked in electric-light baths; he even had one painful séance with a chiropractor. Withal, he would sometimes say wearily, 'Oh, the old machine is wearing out — no one can cure the disease of eighty-two years.'

It must not be inferred, from this rehearsal of his efforts to correct faulty functioning in later years, that Mr. Burroughs was an invalid. On the contrary, his unusually good health was secured at the price of eternal vigilance; and whenever, in spite of this, his enemy intestinal toxæmia stole a march on him, of necessity he redoubled efforts to keep him at bay.

On the whole, he held sound opinions in regard to health, disease, nutrition, and dietetics, and, though unstoical, when once convinced that a thing was deleterious, he could exercise rare self-denial in abstaining from it.

That winter Mr. Ford sent him a donkey from Denver. He styled it his Rocky Mountain Canary, later naming the little beast 'Sally in our Alley.' On return from a visit to Yama Farms Inn he tried hard to propitiate Sally with sweet

apples, but with poor success. She would put back her ears and kick at him when he tried to saddle her. Of his first ride he wrote his hostess at Yama:

I have been on the back of that confounded donkey but once. She used me badly. I could not get her three hundred yards from home, and when she made up her mind she wanted to go back, she went, and went down the drive on a run, with me clinging desperately to her back, expecting every minute to be hurled to the ground. But for a wonder I kept my seat till she reached the stable. I am no horseman and I guess the little big-eared beast knew it. When I came in the house, the Doctor said I was very pale, and I felt pale. She undoubtedly has a big streak of cussedness in her [I hope he referred to the donkey]. I shall try her again, and if she does no better I shall feel like blowing her brains out. The Fords have not turned up yet. The cold has probably knocked them out. If Mr. Ford comes, I shall insist upon his mounting her.

As 'Sally in our Alley' did not mend her manners, he soon disposed of her, preferring to trust to the legs that had always carried him safely. In his Journal he wrote, 'Give me any horse-kind but a female donkey.'

All other thoughts were swept away on the evening of January 6th by the tidings of Roosevelt's death. He talked of his friend in snatches:

To think I should outlive Roosevelt!

He was one of our greatest, our most picturesque characters — a born leader of men, with the qualities of a leader, but too violent to mould public opinion. He was too extreme, too bitter against his enemies. People did not think of him as quite just. Now Lincoln was willing to take a back seat if he could serve his country, but Roosevelt had none of Lincoln's humility — too bad, too bad! He had some glaring faults, but great powers.

Well, I shall never see him any more. The last time I was at the Academy, as we were putting on our coats together, he asked, as he never failed when he met me, if I had written up the Pine Knot visit yet — never a word as to how I was, or what I had been doing.

I confess I was never entirely at ease with him — I rather shrank from him — his dominating qualities, his strenuousness — his mood always antipathetic to my own. [In the same breath he spoke of their good times together in the Yellowstone.]

He didn't think much of my opinion on politics, I guess; but I could have told him why he was defeated that last time — it was because he supported the Protective Tariff, and the people had made up their minds they wanted a revenue tariff. I always wanted to write him a letter giving him some of my views as to some of his political mistakes.

'Great men are not always wise,' Job says. I think an interesting and valuable book might be written on the mistakes of great men. I once suggested this to Roosevelt, but I fear he suspected a covert criticism in my suggestion. He once said to me while he was President, 'My critics point out my mistakes — where they know of one mistake I have made, I know of ten.' . . .

Ah, well! [a sigh and a pause, then tremulously] I shall never see him again. I am afraid I won't sleep much to-night, between the scare from that donkey, and this news. How is my pulse? my heart has been acting up at times this evening. I wonder who will be his pall-bearers, and where he will be buried. [Pause.] And he has never been to Quentin's grave!

The next day when writing of Roosevelt in his Journal, he said he wrote with a lump in his throat. He had loved him more than he had realized. However, this did not prevent him from seeing Roosevelt as he had seen him in life:

The past two years his openly hostile attitude toward President Wilson has been very irritating. It ill becomes an ex-president to deal in denunciation toward the President; . . . but how quickly death makes us forget all that! We remember only his great qualities, and his great service to the country; and I remember his great kindness to me personally. The old man's tears come easily, and I can hardly speak his name without tears in my voice.

I have known him since his ranch days in Montana; and to know him was to love him. . . . His sense of right and duty was as inflexible as adamant. Politicians found him a hard customer. His reproof and refusal came quick and sharp. His manner was authoritative and stern. He was as bold as a lion, and, at times, as playful as a lamb. His political enemies at Albany, early in his career, laid traps for him, in hopes of tarnishing his reputation, but he was too keen for them. He was scrupulous in morals, and unflinching in what he felt to be his duty.

The world seems more bleak and cold since he is no longer in it. . . . Too fond of the lime-light . . . from his excess of the sense of leadership — he was a born leader and disciplinarian. Add a little of Lincoln's humility and self-forgetfulness, and we should have had one of the greatest men in history.

What a center of energy he was in our affairs! He elevated the standard of business and political morals for the whole country, and intensified the patriotism of every one of us. His Americanism charged the very marrow of his bones.

In an article for the American Museum journal 'Natural History' he thus emphasized the arousing and stimulating impact of Roosevelt's personality:

When he came into the room it was as if a strong wind had blown the door open. You felt his radiant energy before he got half way up the stairs. . . . Such versatility, such vitality, such thoroughness, such copiousness, have rarely been united in one man. He was not only a full man, he was also a ready man, and an exact man. He could bring all his vast resources of power and knowledge to bear upon a given subject instantly. Courageous, confident, self-assertive, he was yet singularly tender and sympathetic. He was an autocratic democrat. . . . There was always something imminent about him, — like an avalanche that the sound of your voice might loosen. The word demanded by the occasion was instantly on his lips, whether it were to give pleasure or pain. In his presence one felt that the Day of Judgment might come at any moment. No easy tolerance with him; but you could always count on the just word, the square deal, and tolerance of your opinion, if it were well-founded. . . . What seemed rashness in him was only the action of a mind of extraordinary quickness and precision. His uncompromising character made him many enemies; but without it he would not have been the Roosevelt who stamped himself so deeply upon the hearts and the history of his countrymen.

When I think of his death amid these great days, when such tremendous world events are fast becoming history, and reflect what a part he could have played in them, and would gladly have played, had his health permitted, I realize with new poignancy what a loss the world has suffered in his passing! . . .

[Journal] January 8. Write a letter to Mrs. Roosevelt. A fine poem about T. R. by Grace Vanamee in N.Y. Times this morning — almost a great lyric.

Some weeks later, in the Journal: 'The thought of Roosevelt will not leave me, day or night.' And on January 21st:

Mr. Childs and I drive to Roosevelt's grave in a small cemetery on a knoll. Partly surrounded by woods, with glimpse of the bay to the north, a beautiful, secluded spot. The grave a mound of wreaths and flowers. Spend a half hour there, not all the time with dry eyes. How vividly he came back to me, and the days we had spent together! Taft had been there, the guard said, and wept profusely.

About this time, as a sort of penance, since he had not done it for Roosevelt, even after repeated requests, he dictated an account of his visit with the Roosevelts at Pine Knot, Virginia,[1] (1908) — just a plain account, and lacking the something he might have given it, could he have commanded the right mood and written it out himself.

[1] In *Under the Maples.*

One day at dinner he said, 'I see I shall have to write on Darwin — take issue with him on several points.' With that he began 'A Critical Glance into Darwin,' which first came out in the 'Atlantic,' and was later published in his last posthumous volume, 'The Last Harvest.'

The high-minded, non-partisan behavior of Mr. Taft in seconding the efforts of President Wilson concerning the League of Nations so won Mr. Burroughs that he hoped Mr. Taft would be the next President. He wrote to the 'New York Times' in denunciation of the rebellious Senators who would not rise above party considerations when world questions were to the fore, saying:

> The people at large believe that this country is big enough and strong enough and ideal enough to take her place in the family of nations without loss to her dignity, and without the sacrifice of any of her cherished rights. She went into the War for the world's good, and will ultimately join the League of Nations on the same grounds.

That spring Mr. Henry L. West, whom he had known in the Washington period, visited at the Nest, later writing an article for the June 'Bookman,' one of the best articles about Mr. Burroughs published during his lifetime.

When the advance copy of 'Field and Study' came in March, — the first of his books to appear without a preface, — he said, 'It is like a house without a porch.' Having mislaid the Preface which he had written for it, and being disinclined to write another, the book had thus gone forth.[1]

Although for many years he had had birthday greetings from school-children all over the country, for the first time in the six and forty years in which he had lived in that hamlet, the school-children of West Park, in 1919, noticed his birthday. He was much moved when he saw the gay procession formed by teachers and pupils come marching down the hill to his Study, the American flag borne by his grandnephew, while the others carried pussy-willows and hepaticas.

A guest, who saw the piles of letters and telegrams which the occasion brought, marveled: 'What other author has received such wholesale demonstrations from the school-children of America? How do you explain it?'

[1] The lost preface, found after his death, is to be seen in subsequent editions of the book.

'Oh, it's because I'm a sort of common — they can walk all over me. Most authors are parks, handsomely laid out and fenced in, with signs posted to Keep off the Grass. I ain't made that way.'

At the day's close, over in the swale beyond the railway, he heard the flight-song of the woodcock: first the harsh calls from the ground, as the bird moved here and there for worms, and then the chippering sound as it rose in wide circles to the zenith, from which it showered down the rapid, ecstatic notes — the April twilight made vocal by a bird.

'Doctors I have Known,' and 'Length of Days,' were essays which he wrote during April; the first-mentioned never came to publication; the latter was printed in the 'Forecast Magazine.'[1]

[Journal] April 12. Start for Washington. . . . Stay with the Pattens and occupy Mrs. William's apartment. Delightfully situated, society and solitude at pleasure. Overlook Rock Creek and the Zoo, where I used to walk fifty years ago. . . . Drive to Mount Vernon, and in the house and out [get] closer to George Washington than I ever did before. Edith Rickert and Miss Hummer go with me. One day take Aaron Johns and his wife out to Soldiers' Home. Saturday many friends, old and new, come to see me. One day we drive to Arlington. Saturday dine with Mrs. Seward (Minnie Saxton). . . . Go to the grave of my old friend Frank Baker, in Oak Hill cemetery. Make three visits to the Zoo. Never tire of seeing wild animals.

He wrote home on the 13th:

I hear the animals in the Zoo below me, lions roar, geese honk, and wolves howl. I slept last night like a baby; went to bed at 9.30, and took the through train. . . . I will ask your friend, Hrdlicka, to my party. . . .

White [Orland E.] criticized my Darwin paper helpfully. I shall make a few changes. But he and I are at opposite poles on the main matter. If we are all the work of Chance, then Chance is a wonderful God, and we need no other. . . .

1. From Day to Day

One April evening, at the Nest, as Mr. Burroughs laid aside 'Leaves of Grass,' he said, 'What cheap stuff other poets seem compared with this voice out of the universe!' In May he attended the celebration of the Whitman Centenary at Vassar College.

[1] A different article from one by the same title written in January, 1921, and printed in the *Dearborn Independent*.

He had objected to sitting on the platform, fearing he would be called upon to speak, but on being assured by President McCracken that he need have no fears, consented to sit there. To our surprise, when, after reading his paper on Whitman, Mr. Edgar Lee Masters sat down, Mr. Burroughs jumped up, unasked, and gave a delightfully spontaneous, concrete talk of his friendship with Whitman in Washington. He spoke, too, of Whitman's visit to Vassar in the eighteen-eighties, when they drove over from West Park in a buggy, with a lame white horse — no one at the College but the Professor of Music, Dr. Retter, then seeming to know anything about the poet. He also told of once being at Vassar with the artist Herbert Gilchrist, and that when Gilchrist, in his lecture, mentioned the name of Whitman, a look of unconcealed disgust appeared upon the face of one old gentleman of the faculty, — a striking contrast to the present-day attitude when young women and their teachers were finding in Whitman a guide to a wholesome and elevating attitude toward the facts of life, above all to a clean and sane understanding of wifehood and motherhood.

When rallied about his unsolicited speech, he said, 'You were no more surprised than I was; but I couldn't keep my seat — I wanted some touch of the real man there, even if I had to give it myself.'

After the Whitman celebration in Brooklyn on May 9th, he recorded:

> . . . Afternoon session not very well attended; two or three hundred people, mostly women. A fine speech by Garland. Crothers disappointed me — no charm, little humor, little valuable intellectual content. The pulpit spoils any man for serious thinking. Harned talked; Markham spoke. He saw more in Whitman than I expected he had. . . . A young Jewish poet, Untermeyer, spoke well. Dinner at Mrs. McCarroll's [daughter of J. H. Johnston, Whitman's intimate friend for many years].
>
> Evening session well attended, Phelps the best speaker. He used to despise Whitman, but now he has met with a change of heart. His speech was fine and did my heart good. Doctor Barrus read my short paper. . . . The audience was very attentive. Mr. Howe, editor of the Brooklyn Eagle, spoke admirably and exhaustively on W.'s editorial career; a very valuable paper. Harned spoke entertainingly of his long acquaintance with W. . . . Clayton Hamilton, critic, read some of Whitman's poems admirably. On the whole a great time. Doctor Johnson came with his car and took us home with him.

Apropos the assertion by some writer that Whitman had lacked a sense of humor, Mr. Burroughs said in his paper:

> Whitman was a good laugher, though never an uproarious one. He enjoyed a good story that had point to it, though he rarely told one himself. I doubt if he ever told a story that was not fit to print, or listened to such with any patience. The stories by which men live in clubs and camps were coldly tolerated by him. He hated to hear women, or any matters of sex, treated with levity. It was to him a profanation.

The following day, at the American Museum of Natural History he stood in admiration before the representation of the *Eohippus* — the potential horse — 'the acorn of the modern equine oak.' He was particularly interested in tracing the evolution of the horse as pictured from the little five-toed animal back in Eocene times, through all the changes — four-toed, three-toed — down to the superb creature of to-day.

In his Journal for May 13th, he writes of the time when he learned from Sparrowhawk, a Boy Scout, how to make a brigand steak — an adjunct to outdoor luncheons which he utilized many times thereafter, becoming an adept at threading the pieces of steak, bacon, and young onions on a peeled maple stick, and broiling them over a camp-fire:

> Go with Rev. Elmer and son of Poughkeepsie to visit the beaver dam and haunts in Dutchess county. . . . A memorable experience — the beauty of the day, the interest and kindness of Mr. Elmer, the wild solitude of the wooded chasm amid the hills, the works of the beaver — the fallen tree, the dam, the cut and peeled bushes and trees, the slopes here and there painted with the delicate fringed polygala. . . .

When at Roxbury, on June 1st, they brought him the tidings of his brother Eden's death, he seemed at first hardly to realize it; in fact, to receive it almost indifferently, for shortly after he went on planting his garden. In the evening, however, as he talked of Eden, one knew his calm was not that of indifference. He had faced the death of his brother so often, that the bare statement of the event came at first with little force. His reminiscent talk ran thus:

> I little thought I should live to look into the graves of all my brothers and sisters. . . . I remember when Eden took his first step. . . . The last walk we had together was over in the Deacon woods. . . .

Eden has been on the tops of all these mountains, hunting foxes — has tramped thousands of miles, I suppose, on them.

And in the Journal, June, 3d:

Go to Eden's funeral. . . . All the near relatives present. We bury him beside Hiram in the old glacial sand and gravel. Farewell, dear boy! we were youths on the old farm together. How I shall miss you, I well know!

Some weeks later, on motoring to the home of Eden, he inquired hungrily for every detail connected with his brother's last days, and was deeply moved by the account given by the bereaved wife of the passing of both Eden and his faithful hound:

As master and hound had stood looking out on Bob Mountain, which they had traversed so many times, Eden had said: 'Wilder, old boy, there's a fox up there, but we'll never get it — no, Wilder, we'll never climb old Bob again.' And the dog whined and came closer to his pal, while both master and dog looked out of eyes blurred by oncoming blindness. Wilder's condition became so pitiable that, in mercy, they took his life, and with the very gun that had killed many a fox he had rounded up. For two days his master sobbed and lamented him, and then a blow, as from a hidden hand, laid him low. On rallying from a period of semi-unconsciousness, as speech again became intelligible, he said that he had seemed to be with Wilder on a long tramp on the other side of Bob Mountain — trying hard to reach the top and then come on down home. 'We clambered up and up,' he said, 'but kept getting lost, and when we started down on the north side, we found we had got off the trail onto another spur — *we couldn't find the way home, nohow.*' A few more days and the long trail was ended for Eden as well as the hound.

In the June 'Atlantic,' along with an essay on Thoreau by Mr. Burroughs, there appeared this editorial comment:

In the autumn of 1920 it will be sixty years since John Burroughs's first contribution in the Atlantic. No other writer, we believe, living or dead, with the single exception of Mr. Howells, has been represented in the magazine over so long a period, and very few have exceeded Mr. Burroughs in actual bulk of contribution, to say nothing of the quality.[1]

[1] A writer in 1921, commenting upon Mr. Burroughs's contributions to the *Atlantic*, beginning with 'Expression' in 1860, said that *in each of the sixty-one years since then*, John Burroughs 'has not failed to publish one or more essays where "Expression" led the way.' Whereas, the facts are, that in thirty-three of the sixty-one years since 1860, John Burroughs had no article in the *Atlantic Monthly!* One whole decade saw no essay of his there; and in other periods of several years in succession, no article of his appeared in those pages. It is true, however, that in twenty-eight of the sixty-one years he did have essays in that magazine.

After finishing his article on Darwin, which he sent to the 'Atlantic,' Mr. Burroughs continued to write about him, saying one evening as he submitted still more copy, 'Gad! I hope I will get rid of this attack of Darwinism after a while — it hangs on like a blood-sucker.'

'Let's hope it won't hang on as long as "the mystery and miracle of vitality" did.'

'I hope not — but I had to work my way out of that for my own peace of mind. I suppose there is some other corner of the universe waiting to be explored by me, impatient of delay.'

The next day, much upset at having caught a young woodchuck in a trap, he said, 'The little fellow was crying like a baby, and his mother was standing by, helpless. It was terrible — I'll have to give it up — the traps — it's too cruel! The War has made us all more or less cruel, I guess.' Returning to the Nest for the most of June, he entertained many a guest, and had many an exciting day with the clubs and schools to which he had mortgaged the week-ends of June.

[Journal] June 19. Mr. [Herbert K.] Job finished his job today. [Motion pictures of J. B. and of the birds and scenes around Riverby and Slabsides.] The children have gone home. This is the 19th hot day. Am resting my brain, and all dizziness has left me. Old brains must lie fallow at times.

When, in late June, he arrived at Woodchuck Lodge for the season, he immediately went to examine the traps he had left there in May, and to put more seeds in the garden. At night he sighed contentedly at the peace of the hills, saying, 'The cars and whistles won't keep us awake to-night.' The next day, although he had said he must rest his brain, he said, half-questioningly, 'I wonder if I better not go up to the hay-barn and try to comb my intellectual locks a little.'

Much exercised over the appeals which came to him from the Roosevelt Memorial Association, he wrote about the project to Mr. William Loeb, Jr.:

I see your name as vice-president of the Roosevelt Memorial Association, and I am wondering if you approve of the movement on foot to raise *ten million dollars* for a Roosevelt monument. It strikes me that in these times it would be a wicked piece of extravagance. If Roosevelt himself could speak, I can see his indignation. It is enough to make him blush in his grave. One half million is probably more than has been expended on the monument of any American, and

then to think of ten million! One half million ought to buy and turn the Sagamore property into a park, and a few hundred thousand erect a monument to him in or near Washington. We honor Roosevelt most by taking to heart the truths he taught us, and extravagant display was certainly not one of them.

For the Memorial organization itself to absorb several million dollars would create a scandal. I should like to know if Taft and Hughes and Root approve of the scheme.

No one can love and cherish the memory of Roosevelt more than I do, and I would not have his name associated with any kind of extravagance and folly.

In a similar strain he wrote to Mr. H. L. West, and added:

Why this indecent haste? Give the grass time to grow on his grave before we pile up the marble. There is no danger he will be forgotten. It looks as if some one expected to profit by this enormous sum.

One evening, at the Lodge, referring to Lloyd's book, 'Wealth against Commonwealth,' as being the first to tackle the great trusts, he said that when it came out he wrote Gilder that he ought to make the 'Century' the medium for fighting the trusts, but that Gilder and Johnson were aghast at the suggestion:

But see how the magazines today go for these abuses! Lloyd opened the war. It was as if one went out and kicked over a bee-hive. Lord sakes! how they rushed out and buzzed and stung! Lloyd showed up the crimes — actual crimes — of the Standard Oil Company. Ida Tarbell did, too, later. . . . Well, some good comes out of evil. Much of the Rockefeller money is now being diverted to benevolent purposes.

How Roosevelt was assailed for his fearlessness in attacking the big concerns! Those rebates — that was damnable thieving. He got business and politics on an honest basis. He purified the air like a thunder-storm. Before he died Chancellor Day, who had bitterly opposed him, came around and was an enthusiastic admirer. The square deal was what he [T. R.] contended for, for both sides. I wouldn't cheat a millionaire any quicker than I'd cheat a beggar.

He came in from the garden one day, mystified as to why the peas he had sown a few weeks before had not come up, but presently detected his little favorite the chipmunk in the act of filching peas he had just planted. 'I'll shoot the little rascal,' he declared, incensed; 'I'll *have* to.'

'Not shoot Tiny Tim — your "clever beastie"!'

'Yes' (defiantly), 'shoot him, the rascal! I think more of my belly than I do of him — we would soon be having peas if it weren't for him. *He's got to go!*'

Before the day was over he had shot one and trapped another. One could but think of the day, three years before, when he had been so crestfallen because a chipmunk had got caught in the trap set for rats. Later in the day, as he sat watching the garden, he said, 'We will have to get some feed down in the village for the chipmunks — I can't kill the little cusses — there are three more there now, after my peas.' As he spoke, another ran around his ankles. One knew he could not wage war on them long, peas or no peas, however fiercely he talked. It was, however, a serious matter. Peas were an important article in his diet. After sitting a while in a brown study, he tried a device from which he hoped much: he sprinkled lime all over the soil covering the peas; then, on finding the chipmunks had no aversion to lime, fastened a wire netting securely over the soil, and was quite jubilant over the solution. That night, going to bed earlier than usual, he said, wearily: 'I am all tired out. It has made me most sick to murder those chipmunks.' When, two weeks later, he found Stripe-Coat again molesting the peas, he again set a trap for him; and when the little fellow got caught, instead of acting sorry for him, *he was angry at him for being caught.* To one's protests he replied irritably, 'But what can we do?' An hour or so later he called out, 'Another chipmunk got caught in the trap!' then added, shamefacedly, 'And I went and let him out — poor devil!' After that, we took what peas the chipmunks left us, and were thankful.

'Do you know of any other writer who has had a whack at the whole shooting-match [the universe] as I have?' he asked one summer morning as he brought in some fresh manuscript. That evening, while hacking viciously at the tall burdocks by the road, he called out,

'There's nothing like original sin to keep a man or a plant growing.' And when one taunted him with,

'So *that's* the real reason for your "Length of Days"!' he called back that he ought to add the discovery to his recent article on the subject.

In the Journal for July 5th he chronicles the beginning of what proved one of the choicest friendships of his later years:

At noon comes John Russell McCarthy, the new poet from Pennsylvania, whom we have invited to spend a few days with us. I was so taken with his poems that I wanted to see him. I am in the big hammock out in the orchard when C. B. brings him out to me, a young man of the blond order, 29 years old. I like him instantly. Very modest and unobtrusive. Quite ready on all occasions to take a back seat. A sweet smile, and impressive blue eyes.

'Let's go to the beechwoods,' Mr. Burroughs said, with happy expectancy, after dinner. Watching them walk up the hill, both looking so happy, — their very backs, — their steps in time, the elder, if anything, the more eager, one knew that youth had come into his life to stay. When they returned in late afternoon, Mr. Burroughs was exhilarated as though from wine: he worked with vim on the woodchuck skins which were to be made into a rug for his cot; he talked with unusual animation to callers; he even offered to do several odd jobs around the house which had long awaited his mood to attack; and by bedtime he was still loquacious.

'Let's have this up somewhere, where we can see it,' he said, bringing out a woodcut of Tennyson which he had taken from the Encyclopædia. 'I want to have his beautiful strong face to look at — we shall need it after our young poet is gone.'

The next morning, while the new friends sat together on the veranda, reading Wordsworth, a butterfly came and alighted on Mr. Burroughs's hand. Sitting very still, he said softly to it, 'So *you* like Wordsworth, too, do you? You are a true child of Nature.'

One day, accompanied by our poet guest, we motored to Tannersville, to see the Garlands. In the course of the visit, Mr. Garland said to Mr. Burroughs, 'Juliet Wilbur Tompkins is a neighbor of ours. She would like to call on you.'

'Who is Juliet Wilbur Tompkins?' he asked innocently; whereupon his host lifted his hands in mock horror, exclaiming,

'And he doesn't know who Juliet Wilbur Tompkins is! Well, in Heaven's name, don't let her *know* you don't!'

When the clever lady dropped in, she was so breezy and entertaining that, evidently to atone for not being able to speak from personal knowledge of her work, Mr. Burroughs said, half-apologetically, he was afraid he had read nothing of hers; that his tastes seldom took him into the field of fiction (had he

but stopped there!); and that he found life too serious for make-believe — found more worth-while interest in the birds and squirrels. Mrs. Pottle (her name in private life) took fire at once, and launched into a spirited defense of fiction, — its portrayal of intricate human relations, — then, leaning toward him, she ended challengingly: 'I will have you understand, Mr. Burroughs, that one human being is worth a whole cartload of your *darn little birds!*' A rejoinder that delighted every one, him most of all.

[Journal] July 7. McCarthy leaves on morning train. I love the youth. Wish we could have kept him longer. His wise, sweet smile haunts me. He was companionable without being talkative. Just his presence was enough. He was his own poem 'June' in the flesh. Hair cropped close and a fine-shaped head. Has read extensively, but knew little of Wordsworth. He has a great future, I think. His acquaintance is the event of years to me. His poems have quality, like some rare new fruit.

For days after he would say, from time to time, 'I miss my new comrade.'

On his annual visit to the graves of his kin in the old Baptist cemetery across the valley, he said, 'To be near their dust always helps my imagination.' From the car we saw him wandering about the graves, and heard him murmuring in a low, sad tone. That night he questioned in his Journal why old people regard death so unconcernedly — whether because the race had so long struggled with the idea as to become callous, or that, never having experienced it, we could not take it in. Continuing:

We are blank and indifferent when we should be agitated or unhappy. We visit the graves of our friends and visualize them lying there in the utter silence and darkness, and know that we shall soon follow them, and yet we go home and are soon absorbed in a book or a paper, or are asleep in our chair! Blessed are we in not being able to realize the thought of death!

Later, after visiting the grave of his brother Eden, he wrote:

My imagination puts him back amid the old scenes. . . . The turf on his grave beside Hiram's is green. . . . I could hear his voice, 'John, Time will fetch us!' He was a sort of fatalist; he always said he should not die till his time came, and felt the day could not be put off, hence worried little about it; ate what his stomach craved,

and took no thought of the consequences. I think if he had denied himself more, he would be living now.

The spirit of adventure still clung to him. On return from a solitary walk one afternoon, he told us of starting to cross a field in which a herd was grazing, and that as the herd came toward him, the bull pawed and bellowed threateningly. Advancing toward the creature, with a stone in his pocket, he taunted him with, 'Come on, you coward!' The bull came on. 'I must stand my ground,' he said to himself, and advancing further said, 'Come on — if you dare!' Then the bull turned; but, not satisfied with this, he chased him back to the herd, even driving him on when he stopped to drink. 'I wanted to teach him not to be such a bully,' he said. 'But when he was advancing on me, I said to myself, "You are getting pretty old to tackle Taurus — suppose he doesn't turn tail? — how near are you to the fence?" But I kept on, and luckily he backed down. There must be no half measures if you attempt a thing like that. After he went back to the herd, I came along about my business. Remember this, Harriet (to the young girl who had anxiously listened to the story), bees, and bulls, and ugly dogs must be treated with decision.'

[Journal] July 20. Captain Stone and wife camping up in the edge of the beechwoods. Hamlin Garland and Mr. Wheeler of Current Literature, and Dr. Turck of New York, came. Later a call from Dr. Russell and Reverend St Clair, and Mr. Enderlin; but the event of the day was finding a veery's nest in a tussock of ferns, near Captain Stone's camp.

That evening, telling the Stones of a recent book of Mr. Garland's, he said, 'Garland's description of threshing is an epic, but when he writes of a cow-stable, it's so realistic you have to hold your nose.'

At that time he was working on an essay, 'Near Views of Wild Life' ('Under the Maples'), and also on essays included in 'Accepting the Universe.'

The midsummer days brought many callers from near and far. With one and all the Laird of the Lodge was unfailingly cordial, though sometimes happiest when no one called, save such friends as he would tell of when he came down to dinner: 'I had three visitors to-day — a fairy bird (a ruby-throat), a chipmunk, and a little red newt.' And then he would walk

back and forth on the veranda murmuring lines from Mr. McCarthy's 'June':

'All morning-time, from dawn till noon,
I fished and mused and fished;
One wee-est bite had I for boon;
'Twas all the boon I wished.

'I roam in eye-reach many a mile,
In fancy further roam;
The hours like fairy smiles beguile
My heart to my heart's home.

'Yon veery is great friends with me,
And by my hollow goes
The grumbling, mumbling bumble-bee
That weds red rose to rose.'[1]

Early in August he again joined the Edison-Ford-Firestone auto-camping party, and motored through the Adirondacks and the Green and White Mountains. Extracts from his letters give glimpses of the caravan:

August 8. We are making about 60 or 70 miles a day. It is the old story — dinner at 8 or 9 p.m. I do not try to eat it, hence I go hungry. I have just told Mr. Ford I must have a warm dinner in the middle of the day or I quit. Edison is dictator. He shuns all the good state roads and hunts up rough, hilly, dirt roads. . . . Mr. Ford says I shall have the warm dinner. . . . I will not live on cold 'snacks.'

Aug. 10. I now eat my dinner at night and sleep well. I am gaining in weight and strength. I even ate apple-pie at 8 p.m. Mr. Edison is reading in my book ['Field and Study'] and making critical notes on the margin — very valuable.

On the home-stretch, he wrote:

With 'Blue Eyes' at Washington, Connecticut. I was glad to leave the caravan. This is a wild, beautiful place, and a lovely house, but I am tired and must get home. . . . This is Hamilton Gibson's old home, and there is quite a colony here of authors and artists.

His hostess wrote that after he had been with them a few days her baby said, 'Mother, Johnny Burroughs sings his prayers every night,' — referring to a kind of rumbling singing of 'Jesus, tender Shepherd' that emanated from his room.

[1] From *For the Morning*, by permission of the poet and Doubleday, Page and Company.

On the auto-camping trip, Mr. Edison, taking up a piece of twice-baked bread, would say, confidently, 'The enzymes will go at this right away.' He had much to say in favor of maltose, with which the camp was provided — how much better it is for one than cane sugar — 'But,' said Mr. Burroughs, 'I noticed he took a heaping teaspoonful of sugar in his coffee; and he drank three cups a day!' On return home, he wrote Mr. Edison that he was four pounds to the good because of the jaunt, and was sure the 'monoids' (the tiny beings Mr. Edison had talked much about) that regulated his mental machinery were greatly refreshed.

'Surely the public is wearing a path to my door,' he wrote in his Journal, and again: 'More and more people come to see me. Probably no other American writer was ever so run after. It is a doubtful compliment.'

When a diligent reader (Miss Schermerhorn) wrote him that she could recall no reference to the stars in his writings, and wondered why, since so little in nature had escaped him, he replied:

> I have always been a star-gazer and have sometimes tumbled into the ditch in consequence. The stars are unspeakable. We cannot babble about them as we can about green fields, or about the birds. At times they fairly take my breath away when I look up at them in the still night. The Infinite, the Unspeakable! I cannot hitch the birds and the flowers to the constellations as you seem to. There is nothing earthly about them. They are for the soul alone. In my 'The Summit of the Years,' there is a glimpse of what the stars mean to me (on pages 21 and 22), but I never expect to get on very intimate terms with them.

His abiding interest in all that concerned his son is seen in the following excerpt from a September letter to him:

> You understand your own tastes and powers well. You are certainly a born artist and should have an artistic career, — architecture, or painting, or both. You have a genius for writing also, and a better style than mine, technically.
>
> I want to see you write a piece about Night. You can do it if you try. I want to see you have enough papers for a volume. *Do it.*
>
> I think you are too strenuous and ambitious on the money side. Do not dream of wealth. With this old farm here, and your assured income [from the Riverby property], and the amount I can help you to every year, you need not worry at all about the future. You are sure of $2000 a year, and that is enough. Hire some one to pull the weeds and kill the bugs. . . .

It would have been far better for him, and others, had he hired some one to scrape the woodchuck skins; but there we sat, day after day, those cold, damp autumn days, scraping those skins, 'skinning the skin,' as he said, and tanning them, before sending them on to the furrier. Consequently when, in early October, we closed the Lodge, he was suffering from neuritis in hands and arms and thighs. When the pains took him he queried, 'Can it be Old Age has really got me in his grip at last?' He could see, he said, why old men bent over — his back hurt him less that way. Still, as soon as the pains left him, he was again erect and spry.

One morning that autumn he said, 'I dreamed of Emerson last night — I asked him if he didn't want a woodchuck skin to put in front of his bed, to keep his feet warm when he stepped out. I can't remember his reply, but remember his looking at me in a quizzical way as he put on his coat.' A few days later he said: 'I dreamed of Emerson again last night. His head was bent, he was eating something sweet and holding it in his mouth as though he enjoyed it.' [Other parts forgotten.] Continuing:

'I suppose there never has been a man I revered as I have Emerson.'

'More than Whitman?'

'In a different way — Emerson was more astral — more like a star toward which I gazed. Walt, with all his cosmic qualities, was a comrade.'

A November entry in the Journal reads:

> Make my first acquaintance with Horace, a man after my own heart. My tastes were his tastes. Care little for his poetry, but get much out of his letters — he had the gift of self-portrayal. He and I would have flourished well together at Slabsides, or at Woodchuck Lodge — a real countryman, capable of self-entertainment — a sweet, simple, candid soul.[1]

In reply to a letter from his publishers, stating that they understood from a certain writer that he had some hopes of doing the official Burroughs biography, and that they congratulated him on his admirable choice, he sent the subjoined reply, November 28th:

[1] This recalls a paper which Miss Elizabeth Haight, Professor of Latin at Vassar College, wrote a few years before, called 'Slabsides and the Sabine Farm' — an imaginary conversation between Horace and J. B.

I do not know exactly what you mean by an official biography of me. If it means one of my own appointing, I do not feel that Mr. —— is the one to do it. He has no material, and little knowledge of my life, and he has no word from me as to such an undertaking.

The only person who has the material is Dr. Clara Barrus, who has long contemplated this work, with my coöperation and consent; and I believe that with my aid she can do a very satisfactory biography. She has done much work on it already, and also has a Boys' Life of J. B. nearing completion. She has a wealth of material which she has been gathering and arranging for several years, as well as her years of intimate association with me from which to draw for the official biography.

At the earnest solicitation of Dr. Kellogg, Mr. Burroughs went for a few days to the Battle Creek Sanitarium. His letter, written from there, in early December, shows what dependence could be put upon the solemn promise 'No demands shall be made upon you.'

. . . I like Doctor K., but he is adroit and scheming. The other night he lured me into the parlor which I found crowded with guests, seated in front of a platform. He had told them I would speak, and I couldn't get out of it. I got a-going and talked for an hour. . . . I am incessantly buttonholed by people in the lobbies, and soon there is a crowd around me picking up the pearls of wisdom that drop from my lips. I meet scores of delightful people. When I stick to my room, they come up here. Last night they gave a banquet to the Nut Growers Association, and I was advertised to speak, by Dr. K.; but I fell asleep in my room, and thus escaped. . . . He got me down to the Post-Tavern to a business men's luncheon, and again I had to make a little speech. . . .

I have had more X-rays wasted on me than I ever dreamed of. . . . This morning my heart wrote its autograph. . . . [Details of diagnostic measures.]

From there he journeyed to Chicago, where another ordeal awaited him, a big banquet at the Edgewater Hotel, given by a distant relative — the kind of a function which, he wrote, was entirely out of character for a Slabsider like him, and which he deplored not having had the backbone to decline.

2. New Comrades in Familiar Scenes

On December 19th, accompanied by his son Julian, Mr. John Russell McCarthy, the writer, and her sister, Mrs. John Douglas Johnson, Mr. Burroughs started from Chicago for California, stopping for a day at the Grand Canyon. 'As

overwhelming as ever,' he wrote in his Journal. 'Enjoy McCarthy's and Julian's enthusiasm.' Still, as he looked into the great abyss, he said sadly, 'There can be but one first time.' He was seeing it for the third time, and his feelings were doubtless shaded by the remembrance of his second visit there, with Mrs. Burroughs, as well as the first, with John Muir.

It was Christmas Eve when we reached the Wistaria at La Jolla, a guest cottage at Moulton Villa, where Miss Virginia Scripps, our hostess, welcomed us right heartily.

[Journal] December 25. In this earthly paradise once more. All sun and sky and ocean. What splendor, what novelty!

Christmas! The Pacific furnished the music, the sky furnished the glory, and Miss Scripps furnished the dinner. Never spent a Christmas in such an environment before.

The following day we began housekeeping, the inimitable Miss Virginia bustling in and out to make sure all was well with us — a unique, generous, energetic personality. Mr. Burroughs appointed himself 'Chief Grumbler,' Mrs. Johnson took charge of the *cuisine*, with the young men as aids, while, for the most part, I shut myself away from all allurements and worked upon 'John Burroughs, Boy and Man.' Mr. Julian Burroughs almost immediately began to sketch the rocks, and later to paint (although he had never painted before), his earliest efforts showing surprising feeling for form and color. The young poet walked the beach alone or with Mr. Burroughs, watching the sea-birds and the play of the barking seal. The same day that Julian brought in his first painting of the rocks and the turquoise water, the poet captured 'The Cormorant,' and 'Sea Gulls,' — poems which gave Mr. Burroughs keen delight, while his poem on the Grand Canyon, written on the beach, especially appealed to Mr. Burroughs — its original conception, and restrained, reverential tone.

[Journal] January 17. On Monday we drove over to the Imperial Valley, 120 miles, most of the way through and over great warty granite mountains. Toward the last they were like huge piles of gigantic potatoes, in size from that of pumpkins to that of elephants, and larger. Rocky avalanches were hanging over you and waiting below you. Death and destruction seemed imminent on all sides. Very little vegetation, and none at the last. The naked earth, the colored boulders, lay blistering in the sun. They had weathered smooth and were clinging at the angle of repose, — a succession of

piles of granite *pommes de terres*, two or three hundred feet high. It was all like a nightmare. Never saw mountain scenery further removed from the green, smooth, restful hills that I know so well. They tired me like a fever — a leprosy of stone. . . . At last we struck a cement road and rolled swiftly thirty miles into El Centro.

A wonderful valley, and immense. With irrigation, very productive. The soil is made up of the finest silt — the very flower of the rocks. It is greasy and sticky. Here is the dump of the gods who excavated the Grand Canyon. The Colorado brought all this material from the famous Canyon; and it still keeps the canyon habit. The river and rains cut rectangular grooves in it, or carve architectural remains, or leave detached portions of soil bounded by right lines, level or vertical.

Mr. Burroughs showed more interest in the drive through the deep mud to Calexico and Mexicala than he had in the more picturesque one on the way to the Valley, the irrigating districts, the immense crops of cotton, kaffir corn, lettuce, dates, and olives, making a stronger appeal than the forbidding scenery. When, however, we reached the end of United States territory, he refused to leave the car, and sat disconsolately in a little alley while the party explored the sordid Mexican village, and witnessed in the gambling-hall all the degradation of that vice, shorn of all allurements; where one of the young ladies who played at roulette won thirty cents, to find, on coming away, that her wrist-bag had been picked of fifteen dollars.

While in La Jolla, Mr. Burroughs finished a paper, 'From a Naturalist's Note-Book.' In the Journal he records a regular orgy of speaking: before the Community Club of La Jolla, the University Club of San Diego, the Camp Fire Girls (giving them hints about camp-cooking from an old camper's point of view), before the Scripps Biological Station, the Automobile Club of San Diego, and the Francis Parker School.

During February, though living cozily in a furnished bungalow in Pasadena, he had a rather hectic time. He was especially cheered by meeting Hudson River neighbors there: the Poultney Bigelows, Mr. Jerome Yates, and also his old friend and bird chum John Lewis Childs. The latter, while there, purchased the large oil portrait of Mr. Burroughs, painted at that time by Mr. Jean Mannheim. The thing Mr. Burroughs most enjoyed was the magic rope performance of Mr. Will Rogers, which he witnessed at one of the 'Glad Noises' in

the home of Dr. Charles F. Lummis. Close to the performer he stood in abject amazement while that gentleman gave his unbelievably clever exhibition of complicated coördination — his side-splitting monologue carried on with unremitting gum-chewing and the bewildering rope-magic.

[Journal] March 2. Stay in Pasadena till this morning. Am beseiged with callers and visitors. On February 27, at the Gamut Club in Los Angeles, a great ovation. . . . I speak about one half hour on men I have known — Carlyle, Whitman, Roosevelt. Clara speaks also and does well. On February 28 speak before a crowded house to the Audubon Club, with success. On Sunday, 29th, we receive many callers, the house thronged till ten p.m.

Back at Riverby, he writes in his Journal, March 25th:

An important event in my life today: Hudson Covert, our faithful hired man for 23 years, leaves us to move to a farm of his own. It almost breaks my heart. Never was there a more trusty, industrious, and efficient man; never a man of more cheerful and obliging spirit. It gave him pleasure to do anything for you he could. We shall not see his like again. The place will be home no longer. . . .

The sap was beginning to stir, and he came in one morning asking anxiously where the sap-buckets were: 'Julian says he doesn't know, and now that Hud has gone, there's no telling where anything can be found.' When told where they were when we went West in the fall, he went in search of them, soon returning to say that they were not there. But they were there, in their accustomed place, although because of things since piled in the foreground, the eye had to climb a bit, and he had failed to discover them. 'Incredible that I could overlook them!' he said, and so it seemed, for there they stood in plain sight, though somewhat protectively colored from rust. 'But what of that, to one who writes so eloquently of the "Art of Seeing Things"?' He looked a bit sheepish, admitting, ''Twas ever thus — 'Sulie was always disgusted at my blindness when she sent me to find anything about the house.'

That spring he sent his 'Pacific Notes' to 'Scribner's Magazine,' and worked much on the copy of the new volume which had so many tentative names, — 'The Heart of Nature,' 'The Natural Providence,' and 'The Faith of a Naturalist,' — finally named 'Accepting the Universe.' After having written his preface he said, 'I might have called my book "To

the Unknown God." In a way all my books have been offerings on the altar of the Power back of everything — the Unknown and Unknowable God.'

3. An April Festival

'Eighty-three! eighty-three!' the bluebirds warbled at Riverby, flitting from post to post in the vineyard, while John o' Birds sat in the summer-house on the 2d of April and heard with incredulity the announcement. 'Incredible that I shall be eighty-three to-morrow!' he said; but the song sparrows heralded it, robins chirped it, and even Phœbe, instead of announcing her own name, emphatically lisped, 'Eighty-three!' Had the birds let him forget it, his friends would not. Greetings came from school-children all over the land, and from friends, known and unknown; and at Yama Farms Inn his friend Mr. Frank Seaman arranged a week-end house-party of some forty friends to celebrate the event.

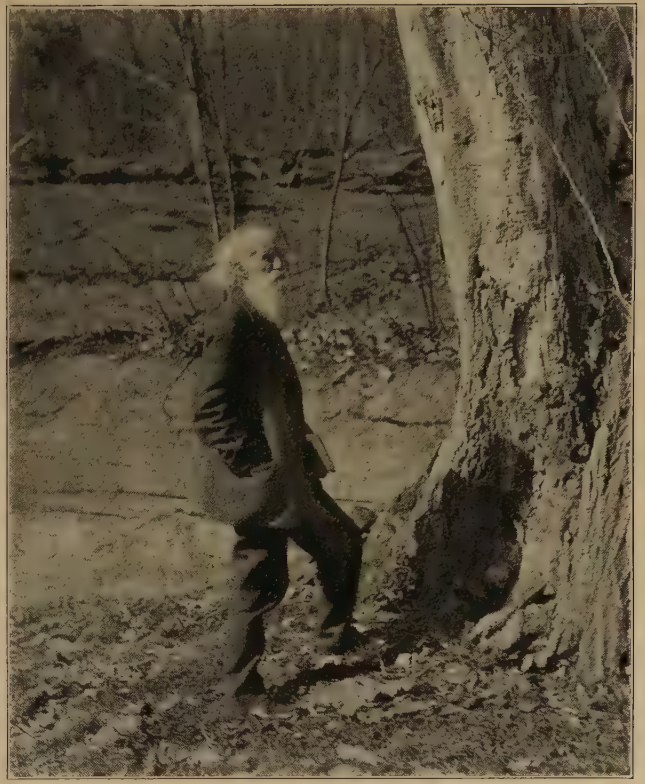
The day dawned bright and genial, 'a kind day,' Mr. Burroughs said. The guests gathered around the pans in the forenoon, where Mr. Burroughs superintended the sap-boiling; later he planted a tree, and strolled through the April woods.

The dinner was a gay affair with the huge cake and a multitude of lighted candles. His grandchildren stood beside him as he cut the cake. Standing there, dressed in his light gray suit of homespun, and looking rosy and happy, elated quite as much with the joy of it all as with the champagne he had quaffed, he made a picture which none gathered there can ever forget. Poems were read, which had been written for the occasion by Judge Talbot, Mr. Hamlin Garland, Mrs. Jean Dwight Franklin, Mr. Poultney Bigelow, and others. Mr. Burroughs's remarks were in the happiest vein. At their close some one asked him to repeat 'Waiting.' When, at one point, he hesitated momentarily, from all around the room arose voices, prompting him, after which he continued to the end. The last lines seemed fraught with special significance on an occasion so momentous, and uttered in his friendly voice:

> Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high
> Can keep my own away from me.

In the evening Dr. Clyde Fisher showed lantern-slides of Mr. Burroughs in his various homes and haunts, Mr. Bur-

IN THE MUIR WOODS, CALIFORNIA, 1920



AT YAMA FARMS INN ON HIS EIGHTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY, 1920

roughs making running comments on the pictured scenes and events, and at the evening's close, in an eloquent tribute of gratitude to host and hostess, Mrs. William Vanamee voiced the feelings of all the guests for an occasion that must ever remain a beautiful, imperishable memory.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE BIRD OF TIME

1920–1921

The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter — and the Bird is on the wing

OMAR KHAYYÁM

AFTER the April festival, Mr. Burroughs wrote in his Journal: 'Henceforth I know the hill will become steeper and steeper, and my breath shorter and shorter. I must gird up my loins to make the climb.'

One April evening he went over to the swamp to hear again the spring mating-song of the woodcock. The bird was there, grubbing for worms, but soon climbed the sky in that spiral flight and sang as ecstatically as when we had first heard one of an April twilight seventeen years before. 'I shall never hear it again,' he said, and in the gathering darkness, the song hushed, we silently picked our way over the low marshy ground, glad to reach the warmth and shelter of the Nest.

A part of his spring work was overhauling his papers and preparing an article for the 'North American Review,' 'A Sheaf of Nature Notes.' His 'Bird Intimacies' [1] came out in the May 'Harper's.'

On looking through 'Harper's' for May he said sadly, 'Howells for the first time isn't represented here — I fear that last illness has pulled on him terribly.' Then, commenting on how few men grow old beautifully, he remarked that the last time he saw Howells he thought him rather finer than ever before; but he mentioned certain authors who were unbeautiful in their later years; then, jocosely, 'I guess J. B. is the only one that is growing old gracefully.' He referred to his increasing proneness to give way to moods, and to write savage letters, and added, 'But you know I never had any manners'; which was not true, for when he chose he could rise to any occasion in just the right way. As though wishing to explain his glumness, he added: 'I live with my dead. It can't be helped. Eighty-three years is a great weight to carry, with all its

[1] *Under the Maples.*

memories — all my family gone — the thought of the Old Home as it used to be, overflowing with life — now all gone but me — yes, I live with my dead.' This, at twilight; but when the lamps were lighted he was cheery and interested in things of the present.

One day when an old man sent him several poems for criticism, — war poems, — he suggested writing him that his patriotism was of a far higher grade than his poetry; until reminded that the correspondent was four and eighty years of age, when he said, 'Well, soften it a little — you'll know how.'

He commented on Henry James's morbid dread of publicity. Some one wondered if Mr. Howells did not have a similar dread. He thought not, then volunteered, 'But he doesn't have any of *my* vulgar craving for adulation.' When some one snickered, he declared, emphatically, '*It's true!*'

On receiving the tidings of Howells's death he said:

> I shall miss him from the world — sad, sad! [mournfully. And then:] He died in his sleep. [A pause.] I suppose now I am the only American author living born in 1837. Well, Howells was too stout — that was against him.

He interrupted himself, in further talk of Howells, to regard curiously a tiny spider: 'Here's the crab spider — I have never seen it before — see how it walks back, or sidewise, like a crab!' And getting up he consulted the encyclopædia about the little creature.

One evening, sitting by the Franklin stove, he began speaking of the piano:

> Strange how the thing came to be invented! It is positively painful to my ears — that clawing of it! My God, isn't it awful! The greatest players give me the shivers, and the greater they are, the more they claw and paw it. It's the devil's own invention. The only musical instruments for me are the wind instruments. To be in a house where there is a piano is torture to me.

When reminded how enthusiastic he had been in Berkeley, California, when his hostess, Mrs. Stone, had played for him, he said, 'Yes, but she is among the few whose playing gives me pleasure.'

'What started you thinking of the piano?'

'I was thinking of that maple wood in the stove, and from that to all the maple wood we saw up at the Roofs — to be

used for pianos — that was the train of thought that led to it.'

After making garden at Roxbury he drove back to the Nest one bright May morning. The sadness which had prevailed during a rainy week, augmented by the death of Howells, gave way to cheeriness, and, taking the wheel, he began singing:

'Little did me mither think
The day she cradled me,
The lands I was to travel in,
The death I was to dee.'

'Who of all the visitors that came to-day,' he asked one evening, 'do you think I enjoyed most?' Running them over in mind, — Mr. Bryan, of Honolulu, who had revived delightful memories, Mr. Carl Akeley, Mrs. Shin, Mr. Garland, neighbors from Highland, and a flock of young people, — I was at a loss to guess. 'It was a tiny warbler — a rare one,' he said. 'It came there on the gravel path as I sat here alone. I can't be sure, but think it was the Connecticut warbler.[1] It appeared around the corner like a little fairy, and as quickly disappeared.'

In June, at Roxbury, with the help of a sturdy youth, he worked strenuously on a piece of road between the hay-barn and the beechwoods, widening it where it had been a mere trench, breaking rocks, and filling in the low places. 'I never use that part of the road myself, but I have wanted to fix it for years, and I may not be around here another summer,' he said. He liked to mend a bad place in a road which others were to traverse, just as he liked to clear out each spring he passed — he might never pass that way again, but others would come to drink, if only the wild creatures. He used to say that the most beautiful memorial he knew of was that built by the Samoans as a tribute to Stevenson — the Road of the Loving Heart.

One day on coming to the house, warm and glowing from his work, his eyes twinkling like a boy's, he told how the dynamite burst the rocks that he and J. W. B. had been nibbling at for two days; and so great was his satisfaction at having finished the job, he went about the house setting to a tune of his own some lines by Mrs. Olive Tilford Dargan.

[1] I am told that it is improbable that a Connecticut warbler should be seen in spring. Probably it was the mourning warbler.

'Gad! I wish I could have written that poem,' he said. Two of its lines oftenest on his lips were:

'They tread immortal measures who make a mellow field,'

and

'The pen — let nations have it — we'll plough awhile for God.'

One day as he and a guest sat on the porch, a wasp kept hovering about the guest, coming back as often as it was shooed away. Noticing that it carried a small worm, Mr. Burroughs cautioned: 'Sit still, Olive; it won't sting you. It has a nest in your chair; be quiet and we shall see.' In a minute the wasp entered a small opening in an arm of the old hickory chair. She soon came out without the worm, and returned later with others. Before sundown she came with tiny pellets of mud and sealed the opening. This, with other experiences of that season, Mr. Burroughs wove into his essay, 'Pleasures of a Naturalist.' [1]

'Doctor, you might say in your book that I had ornithology on the brain at a very tender age,' he offered one June day, on coming down from the hay-barn. 'I remember a line from a poem about a bird — I think it was about the carrier pigeon — the teacher said she didn't know what it meant, — "Nor stoops to earth its wings," — but as a boy I soon learned what it meant.' The earth-baths of the birds reminded him of something else, and he added, 'I saw a humming-bird doing a new stunt up in the beechwoods this morning — taking a bath in a big rain-drop on a little ash.'

[Journal] July 9. McCarthy and his bride came last night. Delighted to see my poet again — his bride a beautiful girl.

July 11. McCarthy leaves today and leaves a void. We drive them down to the train. Finish and seal up my paper on 'What Makes a Poem?' [2]

One day when he had been examining into this question, he got out his own little volume of verse ('Bird and Bough'), and after looking it through said disgustedly: 'What rot they are! I ought to have had sense enough not to publish such stuff.' When one protested, 'They are not great poetry, but they are not "rot,"' he rejoined, 'Well, they are doggerel.'

[1] *Harper's*, and *Under the Maples*.
[2] *The Bookman*, and *The Last Harvest*.

Shortly after, to a correspondent who had sent him some verses for criticism, he wrote, 'They are good, but, my dear sir, your poems must be very good, or else burn 'em up — burn 'em!' Then, in an aside, 'Why didn't I say that to myself about my own?'

After his annual visit to the graves of his kindred he wrote of it and them at some length in the Journal, saying at the close of the entry:

'I said good-bye to them all, and said I would come again — *if I lived.*'

On return from a walk one afternoon:

> I saw a chipmunk eating strawberries this morning. I tried to shame him out of it, but he said it was all he could get to eat. He was eating so fast I told him he would have indigestion. The little simpleton was gathering currants to carry into his hole.
>
> 'Don't you know they will ferment?' I said, but he told me, 'It's the seeds I want, you goose!' And he was right.

The conference at Spa was just then at a grave crisis. How he exulted in Foch's rejoinder to one who had asked him why *he* was there — 'I hear the Allies and the Germans are not speaking the same language. I've come to act as interpreter!'

'Ah! *he's* the man! [fervently] the only great man the War brought out. A look at his face shows what he is — strong, serious, noble — I'd like to touch the hem of his garment.'

'The Unapproachable Rainbow,' already mentioned, brought its author many letters and some reproaches. Some letters he answered seriously, but many were accounts of impossible 'observations.' One lady wrote that she drove through a rainbow near the Bay of Naples; that she could have touched it had she stood on the seat of the carriage; and that she looked back and saw it, after they had driven through it! The preposterous story led him to address her, 'My dear Lady Munchausen.'

'Turn about is fair play,' he said as he helped with the proofs of my 'Boys' Life' of him, 'only I would be more interested if you had a different subject. I'm tired of this old fellow.' He saved me from an absurd slip. In telling of the chores on the old farm I had said, 'John's father would call, "John, go and call the cattle home."' Coming upon that,

he protested emphatically, 'Father never said such a thing in his life. He said, "John, go get the cows!"' In the attempt to make vivid the life of the farm-boy, I had unconsciously paraphased a line from Kingsley, 'Mary, go and call the cattle home.'

The re-reading of old copies of the 'Popular Science Monthly' occupied him much that season. 'Here's an essay of mine you have never seen,' he said one day, 'I never reprinted it. I have just been looking it through. It is a good piece of writing. I am not ashamed of it.' The article, 'The Uniformity of Nature Again' (January, 1886), was in response to one by the Bishop of Carlisle. When re-reading the 'Letters of Edward FitzGerald' that summer, Mr. Burroughs was especially interested to compare 'Old Fitz's' diet with his own.

One evening as he sat on the veranda he announced abruptly, 'This is a dreadful thought — there is never but one sound in the coffin — when the bones fall down.' The involuntary exclamation, and the shudder of his hearer, were evidently the reaction he wished. One could imagine the train of thought which had led to the gruesome remark. A little later he said musingly, as he looked across to the woods above 'Hack's Flats,' 'I would like to know if the hermit sings in those deep solitudes.'

The following day, the man who had started to paint the kitchen ceiling having failed to come, Mr. Burroughs, despite earnest protests, climbed on the improvised scaffold and began painting, pooh-poohing the notion that he might get dizzy while on the scaffold. Since he continued obdurate, a man at work on the rustic garage was persuaded to 'happen in' and to insist on finishing the job.

'You have always said there was no sign of that cloudy arch on my eyes — what about it now?' he asked, and for the first time I detected, on scrutiny, a mere suspicion of an *arcus senilis* at the upper part of one iris.

Day by day, one saw, by little straws, the drift of his thoughts. One afternoon, returning from a walk, he laid a strip of paper on my table saying, 'How would that do for the tablet up on the Rock, after I've 'holed up,' up there?' It bore this inscription, inclosed in penciled lines to indicate the form of the tablet:

J. B.

1837–1924

Sweet before all else were things for thee by nature,
earth, sea, stars, orbs of sun and moon. — MENANDER

Attempting to treat the matter as calmly as he did, I replied, casually, that I had thought the line from 'Waiting,'

I stand amid the eternal ways,

well suited to the purpose as embodying succinctly his attitude toward the universe.

'Yes — well — I don't know — as you think,' he murmured.

'I see you have put it "1924"?'

'Yes, that would make me the age Grandfather lived to be. I *may* live that long — I don't know — *I doubt it.*'

It was but two days later when, after reading and commenting on a letter which had disturbed and saddened him, he said, wearily, 'I will lie down till dinner is ready.' Presently, on getting up to come to the table, he fell to the floor, overtaken by vertigo in the few steps from veranda to table.

His eyes were open and his head partly raised when I reached him.

'I — I — what happened?' he asked, then easily got to his feet. Refusing to lie down, he ate his dinner as usual.

'As I got up, I felt dizzy,' he explained, 'and then a whirl like a cyclone in my brain.' In a few moments he added quietly, 'Such things are very significant.'

We tried to talk of other things, but he soon reverted to it.

'It would be pretty serious for both of us if that should happen when I was driving the car.' Shortly after:

'As I sat here this morning, I thought I must tell you *I don't want a black casket* — none of those black things — let it be white.'

To the suggestion that gray would be more suitable — that white was used for children, he rejoined, 'I'm nothing but a child, anyhow.'

'Come out to the garage,' he said as we arose from the table; and over and over he drilled me as to what to do, if it were necessary suddenly to stop the car; after which, taking a

cane, he walked slowly up the road — the first time I had ever seen him use a cane except in climbing mountains.

That night, and for several days to come, because of irregular heart-action, he was unusually tractable, consenting to lie down much of the time; but as soon as he recuperated a little, he gave scant heed to medical advice, and ten days later insisted on driving to Hobart, though consenting to rest over night before returning.

'So many people want me to do their work,' he complained one day, referring to a letter in which a teacher in Boston had asked him to outline the different methods that plants have of broadcasting their seeds, with the name of a plant to illustrate each method! 'He says he wants to create an interest in nature! Well, write the darn fool to get a botany and tackle the job.'

During a two days' visit at Tannersville with the Garlands, Mr. Burroughs paid a visit to Candace Wheeler, then five and ninety years of age. It was a memorable sight to see the white-haired friends sitting side by side, holding hands and calling each other by their given names. In the midst of their talk of current interests, Mrs. Wheeler said, *sotto voce*, 'John, I am ready to go — I'm only waiting.' And he replied confidentially, 'So am I, Candace, so am I.' Later, when accused of being something of a fraud in agreeing to that, since he knew he *wasn't* ready to go, he smiled merrily, saying, 'Of course I'm not, but I had *to agree with the old lady*.'

After glancing through the advance copy of his 'Accepting the Universe,' he said dispiritedly, 'I don't think much of it — it sounds very flat.'

The most amusing and absurd echo from the new book came from a prominent Western horticulturist, who considered it 'the most important book since the dawn of human history'! — a remark quite in line with one made to Mr. Burroughs by another enthusiastic reader: 'I think your books, and Thoreau's, will be read after the Bible and Shakespeare are forgotten'!

A stranger, who sent him a book of poems and maxims, added to the irritation which the book itself induced, by saying he believed Mr. Burroughs would enjoy many things in the book. 'We will have to take down his conceit,' he said — 'the commonplace stuff!' Whereupon he dictated a letter that

would not do at all to send; yet, when an attempt was made to get him to modify it, he said firmly, 'Either say that, or let me write it.' Fortunately the letter could not go out till the next day; and by evening, after he had rested, he volunteered: 'You might say so and so to that poor devil'; and dictated a much milder letter, admitting the next morning, 'I am glad I didn't send that first letter — the man wrote from a sanitarium — no use hurting him.'

Although he complained in later years that he could not memorize well, every little while he did memorize some poem, either an old favorite or one of the few new ones that appealed to him. He now began showing still more carelessness in spelling, more dropped letters from words, and words from sentences; and, recognizing this, usually left unsealed for the correction of such oversights the few letters he wrote by hand. 'The machine's wearing out — no use blinking the fact'; and then he would ask sadly: 'What if I should get bedridden? I would be such a burden to you. I don't want to live that long.'

Wearied as he got from the throngs of summer visitors, when, occasionally, a carload would come up the hill and, seeing him resting on a cot on the veranda, would drive on beyond a way, then turn about and drive lingeringly by, too considerate to call, he would say, 'It is too bad — they are just the kind of people I feel like hailing and asking to come in.'

One day he chanced to mention that when the post-office was established at West Park, he had been postmaster for a while.

'You never told me that before.'

'What an oversight!' he said sarcastically.

'Did you ever tend office yourself?'

'No, the station-agent did the work — and I shared the profits! But what of that? It isn't important — you don't want to fill your book with trash. You might as well say how often I pared my nails, or greased my shoes.'

'Which wouldn't be often' (shot at him as he left the room).

His curiosity was insatiable. One morning he came in with some scarlet berries in his hand and said: 'I want you to do a little vicarious suffering — taste that berry [of Jack-in-the-pulpit] and see if it is at all acrid, like the root — I don't *think* it is — now taste cautiously!'

It seemed sweet and mild, so, after tasting gingerly, I tried a larger piece, in a moment experiencing intense biting in tongue and throat, followed by persistent coughing.

'I'm sorry I asked you,' he said, 'but I'm glad to get the fact. Edison told me the effect of the root is produced by minute crystals, and that it is purely mechanical. Now some animal eats that. What can it be? Probably the partridge — in her crop it would give no discomfort. Too bad, too bad!' (contritely).

'Too bad *I'm* not a partridge just now,' I managed to say, between fits of coughing.

Some days he would come in laden with trophies and call out, 'Three more 'chucks for your coat, Doctor!' or, 'Another 'chuck — a fine dark one! He will make your collar and cuffs.'

One day when up in 'Uncle John's Lot' setting his traps, he pointed out a seedling apple tree opposite, by the road, saying that the apple was so fine a one he would like it named after him, and cultivated. Later, when Mr. Roy came on from Montreal, he showed it to him, and also another seedling in one of the pastures, the apples from which are large, light-colored, and pointed, with a distinct quince flavor. His guest's suggestion that we call that 'the Pepacton' pleased him much.

In the October Journal he wrote as follows:

> If Harding is elected, I shall be ashamed that I am an American. I am so intolerant of that gang of reactionaries in the Senate, led by Borah and Lodge, that more than ever I would like to see the Senate abolished. Let the House make the laws. What great thing ever came out of the Senate? There have been great men there, but not for a generation or more. They are mostly mere politicians.

During October he went about much with a surveyor whom he had engaged to make a map of the homestead farm, climbing the hills with him and indicating the boundaries. The map was destined to minister to his enjoyment in the months to come. He himself colored the various fields with crayons, saying, as he did it, that he had already got his money's worth (sixty-three dollars) from the map.

He stayed at the Lodge till late October, during which time he wandered lingeringly over the hills and in the woods above the Boyhood Rock, sometimes with friends, but oftener alone.

His capacity for enthusiasm was unabated. When in mid-October he had not secured the almost black 'chuck for which he had lain in wait all summer, he decided to dig him out of his hole. With drill and spade he made a beginning, but the soil was rocky and his strength much below par, and, even supplemented by two pairs of feminine hands, he made little headway. A few days later, however, when two young men guests came, scarcely had they stepped out of their car when he said, 'Paul, you and Eldred come and help me dig out a 'chuck.' From late afternoon till after nine the three stuck to their job, digging about twenty feet of surface, and three feet below ground, before finding the 'chuck in a blind tunnel. Even then they had a long tussle to get him out, a plucky little dog of a neighbor's coming in valiantly at the finish. In vain we called them to supper. They would not come without that 'chuck. It was a picturesque sight — that group out there in the great Ford Lot, under the stars, one or the other prone upon the ground exploring the tunnel with arms and tools, the light from the lantern supplemented by the automobile lights shining from the bar-way. Too exhilarated to know that he was tired, when at last he did return to the house, he declared he never felt better in his life; though he was a bit disappointed that the creature was not so black as he had thought him.

An October letter from Mr. Burroughs to Mr. Ernest Thompson Seton, reads thus:

I was on the point of writing you when your note came. I had some questions about the skunk that I wanted to ask you. I want to know why it is that the skunk so often sprays the night air with his essence. During the day we never smell him unless we come upon one which has been disturbed or killed, and then the odor lingers on the ground for weeks. Recently when visiting Hamlin Garland, he told me that a skunk came frequently at night to feed on his garbage-heap. At nine p.m. we got a strong whiff of him, and saw him distinctly. Also during the night I was awakened by a wave of skunk odor so strong it fairly made my eyes smart. The next morning there was no trace of the odor on the ground or on the air. . . . I am told you have a skunk-farm, so think you may be able to explain it. We know that the skunk does not soil his own garments, and is as free from the odor as any other animal, until provoked to uncorking the vials of his wrath.

While at Yama Farms recently I found your big work on the mammals of N.A., and read with special interest your chapter on the woodchuck. . . . You have collected a good deal of curious and inter-

esting information about him. I have a woodchuck-skin coat which is a handsome garment and greatly admired, from skins I collected. I have this season collected enough skins for a similar garment for Dr. Barrus. I find that woodchucks are not the rovers that some think they are. I captured one this year in the same place where I have been laying for him for three years. It was a very dark old male. . . .

I am perhaps the only man who has seen a chipmunk dig his hole. I wrote an account of it in Harper's some years ago, 'A Bit of Natural History.' It is included in my volume 'Under the Apple Trees.' The chipmunk does not carry out dirt in his cheek-pouches, as I once inferred, but kicks it back to the entrance of his hole, and then shoves it back 18 or 20 inches with his nose until the pile grows and creeps up over the hole, which he stops up from below. He makes a hole which he uses from beneath the ground, 4 or 5 feet from the original entrance. He excavates quite a large chamber under the ground in which he stores his winter supplies. Just now he is carrying in the pits of the choke-cherries which he first strips of their flesh. There is an unusual number of chipmunks this year, so that they are quite a plague. I am more than half inclined to believe that they migrate, as there were not enough here last year to account for the great increase this season.

I shall read the copy of your 'Life Histories' which you have kindly sent me, soon. It is probably at West Park. Your letter was forwarded from there. . . . If I see anything to criticize in it, you will hear from me. . . .

When the October 'Scribner's' came, with his paper 'Under Genial Skies,' he said, candidly: 'It is a pretty good article. There's no one else does just that kind of thing. It is not fine writing, but it is good enough. I am detached from it enough now to judge.'

It was a sad day for him when his nephew (John C. Burroughs) held an auction at the Old Home, preparatory to vacating in favor of the tenant to whom Mr. Julian Burroughs, who then owned the property, had rented the farm. He bid on his mother's cherry table, and bid (but was outbidden) on his father's old saddle. He wandered pathetically through the dismantled rooms, carrying in his hand a picture of old Elder Hewitt which he had found among some rubbish. For days he worked on the old table, scraping off many coats of varnish, to get down to the natural wood. He said of the many stains, 'I don't want to get *them* off — they were made by my mothers' pots and pans.'

One October forenoon, a few days before closing the Lodge,

when walking up the road with a guest, we were arrested by a startling effect around the Boyhood Rock — a golden radiance, almost unearthly, enveloped the Rock and the ironwood tree, the dim outlines of the Rock showing through. The yellowish-green foliage of the tree was reflected on the fog, out of which the tree rose like the wraith of a tree. We felt something eerie, if not symbolical, as we gazed at the beautiful apparition. Mr. Burroughs relieved the situation by saying lightly, 'In a hurry for me to come up there.' (Referring to it as the site chosen for his burial-place.)

He planted a spruce tree that afternoon which a visitor had brought from the summit of Slide Mountain.

[Journal] October 19. Drove down with Mr. Roy at 3. Sorry to have him leave — a hearty, appreciative soul. Helped me get ready the barrels of apples to be shipped home. . . . Miss Chapin of H. M. and Co. comes, a bright interesting woman.

Oct. 23. Drive over to Hobart. . . . I wear my woodchuck skin coat and do not feel cold. Dessy and Harriet go with us. . . . I walk down to the cemetery and stand a long time by the graves of Eden and Hiram. . . .

On the morning that we left the Lodge he made a farewell visit to the hay-barn study and the Boyhood Rock.

'I shall be here again,' he said, answering an unexpressed foreboding. 'I shall be here, though you do not see me . . .' And with a lingering, backward glance at the Rock, and up the road that leads to the Old Home, we came slowly down to the Lodge. He wrote on the gray boards of the siding, on the porch: 'October 26, 1920. Leave today.' As was the custom on leaving, we put Brahms's Cradle Song on the Victrola, and, after locking the door, sat silently in the car till the last strains of the music died away; then, waving good-bye, drove silently down the long hill, and on down to Riverby.

The day following Election Day, after writing in his Journal that he had voted the straight Democratic ticket, he added:

For the first time in my life I am ashamed I am an American. If I were in Europe now, I could not hold up my head and confess I was a citizen of the U.S.A. I must be crazy: I had supposed a League of Nations was a good thing. I knew in advance that it would be impossible to hold the people of this country up to a sense of high moral obligation, yet the concrete reality has cut me deeper than I

thought it could. I am shocked. It seems as if the great mass of the people had overwhelmingly saddled all the trouble of the last 8 years — the World War, and everything — upon poor President Wilson — the high prices, the crimes, the disorder, the taxes. It is probably always so. The Administration is always to blame for everything disastrous that happens, almost for the bad weather. Thank Heaven I was not carried away by the landslide! I am proud to belong to the saving remnant — the minority who still have some sense of moral duty. We cannot shirk or repudiate this debt we owe the world. The welfare of one nation should mean the welfare of all. We all constitute one family. What injures one, injures all. Nations can no longer exist and grow rich by preying upon one another. That is barbarism. If this Republican landslide means that we don't care a damn for Europe, [that] we must keep aloof from all its affairs — we deceive ourselves. . . .

That evening he said, 'Well, we will have to console ourselves with Wilson's noble words: "I would rather be defeated in a cause that some day will triumph, than triumph in a cause that some day will be defeated."'

[Journal] November 4. A cool, bright day. Drive to Kingston to attend reception at Forsyth and Davis's. Meet many people. Speak briefly before the Daughters of the Revolution. Autograph many of my books, and C. B.'s.

The next day, as he lay on the chaise-longue, he said, on awakening from a nap: 'Oh, I just dreamed Emerson was here — had been lecturing. I missed him and said, "Has Emerson gone? Can't we keep him overnight?" But some one said, "No, he wants to get home — he isn't very well — he has pain in the face." Then I looked around and asked, "Has he gone home?" and you said, "Sh-h!" as though he were near. Some one sat there reading, a paper before his face. I don't know whether it was he or not, but I said to myself, "I am going to sit down by him and tell him I think his poetry will last as long as poetry is read." I was going to tell him that there were a few I didn't get hold of — "Celestial Love," and so forth — rather too mystical for me — but that the others are quite wonderful.'

'You don't usually remember your dreams about him as clearly as that.'

'No,' he replied, 'this was just now — hot off the griddle.'

He then talked of Stedman's poetry — his 'Death of a Child,' and other poems — and of Whittier, saying of the

latter, 'Whittier preached against things. The real poet doesn't preach against things — he celebrates things.'

That last day at Riverby, the Coverts and Mr. John Shea came to see us off, Mr. Shea bringing a new Victrola record, 'Duna,' which we played before closing the Nest. Its tenderness moved Mr. Burroughs deeply, and moved us all. Our hearts were heavy with forebodings — he looked so frail. Although he wanted to go to a milder clime, he was already homesick before he started for the great West.

The Last Migration

With a party of five Mr. Burroughs set out for Southern California in late November, — 'a regular hive of B's': J. B., C. B., Ursula B. (his granddaughter), and Eleanor and Harriet B. (nieces of C. B.). Two days each in Toledo, Dearborn, and Chicago, and then began the long journey, *via* the Santa Fé, a day at the Grand Canyon, and arrival at La Jolla on the third of December. The three girls assumed charge of the housekeeping, and the eldest, of the car which Mr. Ford sent down from Los Angeles. Mr. Burroughs wrote his son of the familiar scenes:

It is the same here as ever; the same birds and plovers on the lawn, the same brown pelicans and black cormorants skimming the waves; the same sea-dogs barking out in the blue waters. . . . The days are all sun and sky, but it is cold. I can hardly keep warm at night. . . .

Ursie keeps well and is enjoying herself. The three girls harmonize well. . . . Miss Virginia is in Japan now. We miss her.

If you get this letter, drop your work and come as soon as you can. . . .

[Journal] December 12. . . . We drive 15, 20, or 30 miles each afternoon.

The greatest cradle on earth — the cradle of the Pacific — is still rocking in front of my window; some days a little more gently than others, but the foot or hand that nudges it is never idle. The white drapery is always in evidence. What a vast cradle it is! What myriad forms of life it holds, both beautiful and hideous beyond words!

I heard a talk on sharks the other day from which I learned that there are twelve species of sharks, and that some are oviparous and others viviparous; that sharks are cartilaginous, — have no hard bones. . . .

In response to a letter from a man in Wyandotte, Michigan,

who berated him for his advocacy of 'that scientific lie, Evolution,' as set forth in 'Accepting the Universe,' and who told him that he had a swelled head, and intellectual pride, he replied:

I have your insulting letter of November 7, but it does not disturb me. I believe I am a better Christian than you are. If I were to write such a letter to you, probably your wrath would know no bounds.

I should like to ask you how you think God made man — with his clothes on? his finger nails pared? and his hair cut? Did he say to man, 'Come forth!' and at one stroke original man stepped out from a bank of clay just as we know him today? What is the meaning of the fossils of extinct animals, and the bony remains of the Cromagnon Man, the Neanderthal man, and the recent low type of man-fossil remains found in England — connecting links between anthropoid apes and man? What do all these things mean? What does it mean that the human embryo has at certain stages a coat of hair, and gill-slits, like a fish?

Could not the Creator work through Evolution as well as by any other method? If he created man at one time — what man was it? — Adam in the Garden of Eden? Ask your pastor what he thinks of all this.

If you could manage to learn the A B C of the ways of Nature in the universe, you would look upon the problem of evolution with very different and reverent eyes.

It was with difficulty that he was persuaded to ignore the correspondent's reply to this letter, but he did, after pronouncing him 'an ass of the purest ray serene.' To offset this letter, many another came of quite a different cast. One of these declared: 'If Moses had come down from the mountain with such a message, how much further we should be along the way to that goal which comes into view slowly, oh, so slowly!'

He made no speeches whatever that autumn or winter, and accepted but few invitations to luncheons or dinners, saying wearily, 'People must leave me alone now — I want nothing so much as to be left alone.' He dozed much by day, and, contrary to custom, sat long at his desk, both in afternoon and evening, writing fragmentary things in his notebook. An anonymous essay on senescence[1] in the January 'Atlantic' stimulated him so that he himself contemplated writing an essay on Old Age. 'Who has got a better right?' he asked. Accordingly, he collected and copied many sayings about

[1] By G. Stanley Hall.

senescence in his notebook. Urged on by an unwonted mental activity he sometimes wrote in the early morning hours, before breaking his fast. The 'Short Studies in Contrasts,' the 'Day by Day Notes,' 'Gleanings,' and 'Sundown Papers,' incorporated in 'The Last Harvest,' were written during December and January.

One day on reading a review of a certain book about Woodrow Wilson, he said: 'I see he [the author] attacks President Wilson's style. The scoundrel never forgave Wilson for what he did to Germany. I want to see what he has to say about him. I've seen him. He's a sharp, keen man, but with no moral anchorage.'

One morning he shocked us all by commenting favorably upon a project for utilizing the power of the Colorado River, saying he would be willing to have the whole of the Grand Canyon filled with water if it would help along the work of the world! To the query, 'Let all that beauty and sublimity be obliterated?' he answered defiantly, 'Yes, beauty is the cheapest thing in the world. Why should that great hole in the ground be kept for people to gawp at?'

'Shade of John Muir! and shade of the author of "The Divine Abyss"!' But in the mood he then was in, he only said the more:

'Yes, I would fill it up. I would abolish Niagara Falls. I would use all forces going to waste. Our coal is going to give out. We have got to get power from water.'

Of course this was only a mood, and the mood of a sick man, with a bit of obstinacy thrown in; but it was a mood that recurred more and more as he bent under the weight of illness and years. The rapt admiration of our young girls at the supernal glory of the sunsets, and, at times, any one's exclamation over the beauty of sea and sky, would rouse his perversity. 'I have seen sunsets all my life,' he would say; or would make like remarks that caused others to look at him in wonderment. It was painful to see him who had so loved beauty almost flouting it, even though it was largely caprice — like that of a sick child; while the significance of these changes in him made one wish, with him, that the weary miles between him and home were already traversed. Still, however glum or oppressed he was, on hearing the blessed 'Duna,' his mood softened. One evening in a choked voice he said, 'Invariably

when I hear that, I stand down by the Hemlocks looking toward the Old Home.'

Back of the unwonted manifestations noted here, were the physiological narrowing of interests, the blurring of emotions, and the lessening of physical and mental vigor incident upon old age. Other insidious changes came and went: he had less ability to look on all sides of a question, even a comparatively simple one, and to weigh things judiciously; and yet, after a good night's sleep, or on recuperating from the many short illnesses which assailed him that winter, his interests would again broaden, his alertness and curiosity in nature again reappear, and his sympathies again quicken. One evening when we were reading aloud his 'Divine Abyss,' he listened with interest, saying sadly at the close, 'It is well I wrote that when I did.'

It was painful to see him, on a few occasions, stand quite still in the middle of the room with a lost look, soon, however, recovering himself. His failing memory annoyed him; and when he would forget to consult his memoranda, while marketing, and come back to the cottage without certain articles, he would require himself to return for them.

One day, shortly before Christmas, he said with concern, 'I have forgotten where San Diego is.' It was the first lapse of this kind, and he looked so helpless as he said it. To the reply, 'It is sixteen miles south of here,' he responded, 'Oh, yes, so it is.' Another day, looking up from his reading, he asked, 'What is the name of that place near Washington — just above it?'

'Georgetown?'

'Yes, it *is* Georgetown, isn't it?' he said, as though greatly relieved.

Far more surprising was the instance when a caller, speaking of Hawaii, asked him something about the islands which he would ordinarily have answered readily, but which he could not then remember about. After I had supplied the information, he asked dubiously, 'Oh, were *you* there with me?' On the other hand, a few days later, when he was trying to recall something about Alaska, he turned and queried, 'Doctor, what was the name of that little town (giving some description to identify it) where we stopped?' (He had taken the trip to Alaska two years before I met him.)

'Oh, that's so, you weren't there'; and the next instant he was as keen as usual.

When, along with these lapses, came more pronounced disturbances common in advanced age — easy irritability, undue self-absorption, temporary indifference to the needs or rights of others, and sometimes an obstinacy that threatened the safety of himself and others, the condition was serious indeed. One afternoon on the drive to Pueblo Farm, the gasoline giving out, he told my niece to back the car down a steep, winding road bordering a deep canyon — a perilous thing for any driver to do — and when I refused to allow her to attempt it, declared he would do it himself. It was with difficulty we persuaded him to wait till some of us should walk on to the farm for gasoline.

Like a fog settling over the landscape these moods came, but when the fog would lift, the old tenderness and consideration shone out as before. Strangers who met him at this period and found him less genial than his wont, even, on occasion, brusque and curt, and correspondents to whom he wrote when half ill, need to remember that he was a sick man of advanced age.

Some will think the veil of silence should be drawn over this period of decline; but it is his pilgrimage through life I am trying to trace. We must not look for the joy of the morning in the waning light, nor expect vigor and buoyancy as the wearied pilgrim nears the journey's end.

He felt most pleasure in meeting those with whom he had had earlier associations. Many hours in La Jolla were cheered by calls from old Poughkeepsie friends, the Hinckleys, and Dr. Grace Kimball, his wife's physician for several years.

When he found he could make but little headway that winter in re-reading Bergson's 'Creative Evolution,' he wondered if his mind was too wearied to grasp it. In the 'Sundown Papers' ('The Last Harvest'), he commented rather cursorily upon Bergson. That winter he read again (for the fourth time) 'Two Years Before the Mast,' and with unflagging interest.

During a visit from the McCarthys, then living in Los Angeles, he and the young man strolled along the beach, dug clams, and discussed poetry. A charming ditty on the titlark was hatched out in less than two hours after Mr. Burroughs

had asked his friend to see if he could put the bird in a poem.

Scarcely an evening during January but that he begged, 'Oh, let's have "Duna"!' and would always plead, 'Play it again.' He called it 'the song that plucks at the heart,' so completely did it voice his homesick longings:

> 'I'm weary of the sea winds, I'm weary of the foam,
> And the little stars of Duna call me home.'

His last Journal entry for the old year was:

The Pacific very calm the past few days, only a gentle rocking. The brilliant sunshine continues. I begin to look for a day with the lid on. Oh, for the shut-in feeling of a storm! the privacy of storm. I think I could get closer to myself on such a day. At any rate, it would be more like home.

January 2, 1921! I do hope the flood of Christmas cards is over. What a nuisance it is — inflating one's mail with wind. In afternoon walk to the golf links and back. Good for me; makes me sleep better o' nights.

I can never get over the incongruity of that barking of dogs or hounds [the seal] out there in the water — the same pack of them, apparently, as a year ago, and in exactly the same spot.

In early January he dictated many letters, indicated many passages in his notebook which he wished copied; and did some editing of the essay 'Flies in Amber'; but his mind tired easily.

He had driven the car but a few times after reaching La Jolla; but one day in January, when the young girls were late in returning from a picnic, becoming worried lest they encounter tramps or rowdies in the canyon, he proposed going to meet them. 'I will drive carefully,' he promised. 'I won't be foolhardly; and Harriet can drive back.' Through that dizzy, narrow canyon road he managed the car well, but was glad to relinquish the wheel on our meeting the picnickers. It was the last time he ever took the wheel.

That same day, one of the women workers from the American Museum of Natural History (who had spent a day at Slabsides about six weeks before we had come West) called on him in La Jolla, and to her amazement was met by him as a stranger. He had great difficulty in recalling her recent visit to Slabsides. Startled at the change she saw in him, it

was with the utmost concern that she watched us set out for the canyon ride with him at the wheel.

In early January he was taken with a sharp bronchial attack, from which, however, he soon rallied. In mid-January he began sitting for his portrait to Mr. Harry Shriner. The painting represents him in a withdrawn, meditative mood, strongly suggestive of Whistler's Carlyle.[1]

One day, indicating the map of the homestead farm, which was hanging on the wall of his room at the Wistaria, he said: 'It isn't those rectangular colored checks that I see when I look at it, but the meadows and pastures, the beechwoods, the sap-bush. An emanation from the Old Home seems to come to me when I pass it on the wall.'

[Journal] January 17. . . . Have been reading again the correspondence of Emerson and Carlyle, and living for a week or more with the two great spirits, sharing their troubles and triumphs. What an experience it has been! I feel lonesome. Like Emerson's letters the best. One tires of Carlyle's groaning and appealing to Heaven. He did no work cheerfully and uncomplainingly. He should have been thankful that he had work to do. What an outcry, and yet all the time invoking the Silence! The Old World sorrow and pessimism in one, and the New World optimism and courage in the other!

To his faithful Hud, early in the year, he wrote for points on the wild creatures:

I want you to tell me what you know about skunks. Does more than one occupy a hole at the same time? How do you kill them without getting their odor on the fur? There is a small skunk out here, about the size of the gray squirrel, called the civet-cat. I have not seen him, but have heard of his strange doings.

The trapdoor spiders in the vicinity interested him keenly, and he made many a trip to their silk-lined nests in the adobe soil near the beach. In his essay 'Under Genial Skies' ('Under the Maples') are found observations on these curious creatures.

Probably the last letter he ever wrote (except a few notes later to his son), was the following to Judge Talbot, on January 22, 1921:

I was very glad to get your good letter of the 9th. I have heard from other sources of the mild winter you are having in the East,

[1] It is owned by Miss Ellen Scripps of La Jolla.

and I feel like going home to get warm, for I have suffered with the cold here — the peculiar kind of cold that penetrates to your bones. . . . The rainy season has lately set in here. . . .

From my windows at all hours of the day I look out upon the desert of the Pacific Ocean, and it looks forbidding and inhospitable. I know I would perish of thirst there as quickly as I would in the Sahara Desert, and the waves would hurry me out of sight quicker than the sands of the desert would bury me. I am tired of it. We have lately got a Victrola record called 'Duna,' which especially appeals to me. One stanza is:

> When I was a young man, before my beard was gray,
> All to ships and sailoring I gave my heart away;
> Now I'm weary of the sea winds, I'm weary of the foam,
> And the little stream of Duna calls me home.
> [He quoted from memory]

I suppose every man has a Duna — a little stream in his life that calls him back home. You doubtless have in yours. I certainly have in mine. You must get that record if you haven't it.

I am delighted to hear you are going to make a run for the Supreme Court judgeship. It is your duty to do so. I wish I could help you. I feel confident of your success. After that I want to hear of your running for Governor of the state. In that case, I could do a little electioneering for you.

Well, we are booked to leave for home on March 25, and I hope to be there before my birthday.

I have had two attacks of my old autointoxication trouble here, but they have not been severe, and on the whole I've got along pretty well. I have done some writing.

My 'Accepting the Universe' seems to be having quite a career. I hear from it from many sources. Many more people are following in my acceptance than I expected to hear from. Indeed, I have received a good deal of extravagant praise which would make me blush to repeat to you. People seem to be looking for something outside of theology to plant their feet upon.

I think next summer I shall be glad to come over and visit you — if I keep well. We hope to be at Woodchuck Lodge in early June.

We hear from the Doctor's book[2] on all sides. It seems to be having a phenomenal success. I find it very interesting reading myself. She is writing another, and more exhaustive volume which two or three different publishers are anxious to get hold of. I did not think that a woman could write the life of a man, but she seems to be the exception, and I shall afford her all the help I can.

I hope Mrs. Talbot will soon have her eyes completely restored, but I am worried about poor Dr. Day. His metabolism must be in a pretty bad way to be affected in that way. I should change all my diet and live on simple things, and see what the effect would be. I am getting great benefit from eating Armour's Rolled Oats, un-

[2] *John Burroughs, Boy and Man.*

cooked. They are delicious, and I don't have to put in my stomach that heavy sodden mass of cooked oatmeal. With love to you both

Always your friend

JOHN BURROUGHS

One day in late January, handing me a penciled sheet, he said, 'You may find that of use in your book.' It runs thus:

Emerson in his old age made a list of names of men that he called 'My men.' Here is a list of *my* men — that is, of men to whom I feel under obligation — men who have helped me to find myself: Wordsworth, Arnold, Carlyle, Tyndall, Huxley, Darwin, in England. Emerson, Whitman, Thoreau (and, in a minor way, Muir), in this country.

The men to whom I am indebted for entertainment and knowledge is legion. [This is the only time I knew him to name either Thoreau or Mr. Muir in this connection.]

On the last day in La Jolla, Mr. Burroughs permitted Dr. H. H. Laughlin to take a life-mask of him. The work, which the biologist had thought would take about half an hour, consumed more than five hours. The ordeal would have been trying at any time, but how much more so, in his weakened condition. Still he climbed up on the dining-table, and submitted to the besmearing of face, hair, and beard with vaseline; and lay there while the plaster of Paris dried on his face, the air coming to him through quills in his nostrils. His pathetic tractability made it seem all the more cruel to subject him to this. Out of consideration to him, Dr. Laughlin removed the mask a little too soon, thus ruining it. After more than an hour spent trying, unsuccessfully, to repair the mask (during which the ordeal of removing the vaseline was gone through with), to our amazement Mr. Burroughs offered to have another impression taken. The second mask was a success.

Later, in Pasadena, in a little cabin amid the hills, Mr. Burroughs felt more at home than by the restless sea. There, with 'the three graces,' we again began housekeeping, the one fly in the ointment being the fireplace, which smoked abominably. However, after a satisfactory consultation between Mr. Burroughs and a Japanese workman, the former went to the home of a friend, Mrs. Stanley Du Bois, while the chimney was successfully overhauled. A day or two before going, he made the last entry he ever made in his Journal — the Journal

he had kept for five and forty years. It was on the 4th of February:

Came to Pasadena Glen on the third — a little bungalow called The Bluebird, snug and comfortable. . . . Life seems worth living again. Drive to Sierra Madre P.O. today. Now, at seven pm, I hear the patter of rain.

During those few days in the city, he again became ill, and, though surrounded by every comfort, and with hospitable hearts and willing hands eager to do for him, he was impatient to get back to the Glen. From that time his heart functioned more poorly, and other symptoms showing progressive decline became prominent. Yet he had a few days of real happiness in the cabin, seeing old friends, and revelling in the genial sights and sounds. 'How sweet this is!' he would say. 'No more pounding of the restless sea; no more barking of seals, nor horrible racing of the cars, day and night, past the door.'

'Sandy' Smith, his old Roxbury schoolmate, seven years his senior, came several times to see him. One day he said with infinite sadness, 'Sandy, your family of eight are all living but one, but my family are all gone but one.'

Chancing upon some crude samples of free verse about that time, he became much exercised about them, and declared he was going to 'skin alive' the chief offenders. His protest, 'The Reds of Literature' ('The Last Harvest'), was written at this time.

About the middle of February, becoming progressively weaker, he consented, after much persuasion, to stay in bed a few days, during which time he went over his manuscripts, which he had got so badly mixed he declared they could never be straightened out. With his help, however, it was soon done, much to his relief, after which he discussed the arrangement of the material for his two books (published posthumously); made ready a paper for 'Harper's' ('New Gleanings in Field and Wood'), and another, which was incorporated in 'Under the Maples.'

A short paper about Howells, for the Howells Memorial meeting at the American Academy of Arts and Letters, which he dictated February 13th, was the last literary work he ever did. A few excerpts from the paper follow:

When Mr. Howells died I think I felt much as a soldier must feel

when a comrade falls by his side. Although our tastes were so dissimilar, as well as our chosen fields of work, we were born in the same year, he being my senior by about a month; and we have been for more than fifty years before the reading public, he in his masterly portrayal of human nature, and I in my efforts to interpret outdoor nature.

. . . I confess I cannot read his novels, but I am not a reader of fiction. If I quarrel at times when coming upon his naked realism, I am keenly alive to the felicity and charm of his style, and the enrichment of our literature through his versatile pen. . . .

The thing of Howells' that comes most closely home to me is that paper in Harper's which he wrote shortly before his death — 'Eighty Years and After.' In my opinion, it is the best thing on old age that English literature affords. In fact, I know of nothing on old age in any literature that is comparable with it. Its physiology and psychology, its wisdom, its philosophy, its serenity, are beyond praise.

At that time, Mr. Burroughs reëdited his essay 'Flies in Amber,' and when asked if he could not add a few words to round out the paper, sat up in bed and wrote the closing passage of that essay, which proved to be the last sentence he ever penned.

It was on the evening of February 15th that I discovered an abscess developing at the upper part of his chest, under the left pectoral muscle. That it could have reached such a point without his having noticed it — he so close an observer of himself! — was surprising, as well as highly significant of the gravity of his condition. He seemed annoyed when medical counsel was summoned, and was even disposed to make light of the 'bunch.' Two days later, on the way to the hospital, oppressed and apprehensive, he said pathetically, 'None of my people ever went to a hospital.' Fearing that he would have to be left there among strangers, he was touchingly grateful when the hospital authorities consented to my having a cot in his room, and remaining with him during his stay.

All the sights and sounds of the hospital, the X-ray apparatus, the paraphernalia of the operating-room, he regarded with apprehension. Dr. Henry Sherk opened the abscess under local anæsthesia. The patient bore this quietly, clinging to my hands; but I can never forget the beseeching, almost accusing, look he gave me when he felt the hypodermic needle — as though he had trusted me to spare him that pain.

During the four weeks in the hospital, he seemed at first to improve, then steadily to decline. Chafing against hospital

rules and regulations, he was sometimes the despair of the nurses, especially when the wound had to be dressed, and at bath time. 'Man is not an amphibious animal,' he urged when subjected to a daily bath. He enjoyed the visits of his physicians, but saw few callers. The daily calls of 'the three graces,' with the mail, he anticipated eagerly, always hoping for letters from his son.

Various tests made by Dr. Breed, a specialist in metabolism, proved of great interest to him. He looked forward with keen interest to the Doctor's calls, and their discussions on diet and nutrition; and when, after following the new diet, he noted a lessening of the intestinal torpor, he was overjoyed; but he was correspondingly depressed when the improvement was not sustained.

Late in February he asked me to order the garden seeds for Woodchuck Lodge, and arrange for the ploughing of the garden. In March he began dwelling much upon the homegoing. He was pleased to learn that, instead of going directly to the Nest, we were to go for a time to the home of Dr. Freston, in Highland, while the Nest should be made ready for his coming. In his weakened condition, no thought of a birthday celebration was entertained. We abandoned the hope of even having his son and his family at dinner, all plans being directed toward conserving his strength to the utmost, during the journey and on arrival home.

One night at the hospital, early in March, he said on awaking, 'Doctor, I feel as if the six stanzas of "Waiting" were etched on the skin of my wound'; and replied to my inquiry, 'I can't explain — any more than that.' After the wound was dressed, he felt easier. Recurring to this the next day: 'I had a terrible nightmare — I could see those six stanzas, each in a frame of fire. It didn't say "Wake-Robin," — or "Waiting," — but it was understood to be them — in frames of fire.' Unable to elaborate this further, he said wearily, 'Oh, you know it's hard to tell your dreams.'

One day as he was sitting up in bed, just after his dinner-tray, he said: 'Doctor, I'm all confused — help me to straighten things out. What am I in the hospital for? How long have I been here?' Then, after explanations, 'How did we find out about the abscess?' And 'Where were we before that?' These and many other questions, extending back,

step by step, over the events of several weeks. He showed great relief as we slowly pieced it all together. And then, 'But how did we happen to come to California, anyhow?' And farther still we retraced events. The disorientation shown by these questions came to me as a great surprise; there had been so little evidence of his failure to keep a keen grasp on his environment. It was doubtless chiefly due to exhaustion from the depleted bodily state.

For a month or more he had refused to look at the daily papers, and had listened only occasionally to reading from them, always stipulating that nothing should be read about the President-elect. His eagerness for the 'Atlantic Monthly' was keen, until a copy was secured, when he showed little interest in its contents. Several times he asked for Boswell. Twice in succession he asked to have Doctor Johnson's famous letter to Lord Chesterfield read aloud, fairly gloating over its respectful satire.

'When are you going to write *your* Boswell of J. B.?' he asked one day; adding, 'You can make a book that no one else could approach.'

'Do you really believe I will live to get home?' he asked once after we had been discussing the arrangements for the journey.

When, on March 17th, we left the hospital and returned to the Bluebird cabin, weak as he was, he refused to be carried up the stairs, and slowly climbed them, by the aid of a friend's arm.

Spring had already come to the Glen. The calls of the birds and the frogs were welcome indeed. His pleasure at being there was touching to see, as, during that week, he lay on a cot on the veranda, apparently gathering strength for the home-journey. Yet there were indications that unless the start were made soon, the journey could not be undertaken at all.

Among the friends who came to see him the day before he started for home, past and present, near and distant, were curiously represented. There, three thousand miles from his home, was 'Sandy' Smith, his Roxbury schoolmate; the Simmons family, old Delaware County residents; Martin Sherwood, his one-time neighbor at Slabsides; Mr. Yates, a neighbor near Riverby; Mr. W. E. Cook, a friend of the old Middletown days; the daughters of Francis Fisher Browne,

Mrs. Sellers, and Dr. Charles F. Lummis (all closely associated with Mr. Muir); the Roofs from the East, whose trout streams he had often fished; and, with these, many friends in Pasadena, that friendliest of cities, all of whom vied with one another in devising things for his pleasure and comfort on the journey.

'How happy we could have been here, if I had been well!' he said that last night in the cabin; and, being inclined to talk, he reviewed experiences of the past twenty years, his mind as keenly alert as ever. He faced the present, and tried to forecast the future, especially for others, knowing his own could be of but short duration.

'I suppose you have gone over everything — thought out everything — about how we are to make the trip. Crossing the desert will be the hardest part, and that transfer at Chicago.' Reassured by rehearsal of the plans, he said gratefully, 'What courage you have!' and was soon asleep.

CHAPTER XXXVI

GOING HOME

1921

How soon will all my lovely days be over,
And I no more be found beneath the sun;
Neither beside the many murmuring sea,
Nor where the plain winds whisper to the reeds,
Nor in the tall beechwoods among the hills.
. . . . . and too soon
A great wind from the dark will blow upon me
And I be no more found in the fair world,
For all the search of the revolving moon
And patient shine of everlasting stars.

BLISS CARMAN, after Sappho

THAT day in late March when we set out for home was like a day in June. Physicians and nurses from the hospital, and a host of friends bearing gifts and comforts for the long journey, were at the station with smiles and cheering words. It had been prearranged that on arrival of the train his berth should be ready, so, with no exertion on his part, he was skillfully placed in bed where, from the windows, he waved farewell to the friends, and was soon being refreshed by the ice-cream brought from the hospital.

In the night he was feverish, and at times, disoriented; but cool sponging reduced the fever; and in the morning he said gratefully, 'I have had worse nights — "it micht hae been waur."'

'The beautiful country,' he murmured through the day as, with sad interest, he looked out upon the hurrying landscape. One of those days crossing the desert, while eating asparagus, he said, 'You will think it queer — I guess I'm out of my mind half the time — but I can't think how asparagus grows.' Then, as the talk recalled his asparagus-bed below his Bark Study, where he had struggled so often with the quack-grass, he said: 'Why, of course — I know now. Yes, I suppose it *is* the weakness that makes me so queer at times.'

Craving reassurance, he got distinct comfort from the continuous assumption of his safe arrival home, and from casual allusions to plans for the coming summer, though watching

me narrowly to detect any wavering. At Albuquerque he said, despondently, 'I don't believe I will ever live to get home'; but after being reassured said, 'I mustn't make it any harder for you than it is'; and was soon commenting on how smoothly the train ran; how comfortably we had come thus far; and of what he would like to do in April.

Heart and kidney symptoms, however, were becoming more grave. Fortunately he could not see the increasing edema of the ankles. He was pleased to learn that I had telegraphed, *en route*, for Dr. Crump to join Dr. Freston, and meet us in Poughkeepsie; and that a trained nurse would be there on arrival.

Going through Kansas he said with a pathetic smile, 'We won't get our walks down Mahogany Lane this time' (referring to walks in 1909 through the narrow, mahogany-lined passages on the long trains); from that, recalling walks of long ago in Snake Lane and Columbine Lane, around Middletown; and in Tansy Lane on the Old Home farm.

During those days there was the wistful look upon his face seen in the photograph which Dr. Charles F. Lummis took of him the day before he started on the homeward journey — a clear-eyed, steady gaze into the beyond. He was facing the Great Mystery, and facing it with something of the loneliness of a little child about to go alone into a dark room. There might be light beyond — he hoped there was, but could not know. And because he did not know, one sees that appealing, searching look in the eyes. In absolute honesty he faced the Mystery. Perhaps death ends all — perhaps it is but the opening of another door — whichever it proves, it will be well. And yet — and yet — he still clung to the beautiful world about which he did know — still clung to life and love, which had yielded him so much. The divine ship, the good old Earth on which he had made his happy voyage in the universe, — must he leave it for an unknown shore? As the shadows deepened around him, this lover of the day was loath to leave the good ship and step alone upon a strange shore in the darkness.

During those weary weeks at the hospital, his longing for home had increased daily; he had yearned hourly for his son, and his dread of dying away from home was acute. Not that he expressed this; but one divined it. He had always said he should go quickly, — wished to go that way; yet mutely he

made it apparent that he dreaded the final step alone into the dark, by seeking the comfort of a friendly hand.

As we neared Chicago his condition had become increasingly grave. During the enforced delay there, he spoke with the friends who met us and inquired interestedly about their families; but to all attempts to alter our plans, and persuade us to break the journey there, he exclaimed emphatically, 'No, *no*, NO!' And so great was his relief when he was safely in the berth on the home-stretch, he summoned funds of reserve strength; the breath became easier; his eyes had their old light; and his voice grew stronger. When the train got under headway, our young companions, coming into the stateroom to see him, were amazed at the apparent change for the better. 'Yes, I guess I've got a new lease of life,' he said hopefully; and at Toledo, when friends came aboard, his face was fairly radiant as he said to them, 'Just think! to-morrow by two o'clock I shall be home!'

After midnight he grew rapidly weaker; and as the train sped on through the darkness, the dread Messenger gained on us relentlessly. From time to time he asked where we were; again would ask the time, seeming to compute how long before the next stop. At two in the morning, on the 29th of March, awakening from a doze, he asked, 'How far are we from home?' While I was supporting his head to arrange the pillows, he looked up mutely — his face dropped to one side, and all was over.

Death had come so swiftly he never knew that we had lost the race by but twelve hours.

On April 2d, while a nation mourned, a few friends gathered at the Nest for the brief services; and on April 3d, his eighty-fourth birthday, his body was laid to rest by his Boyhood Rock, on the farm where he was born.

The words which he himself uttered on the burial day of Emerson, may well be applied to his own passing:

> It was fit that he should pass in April . . . the month that opens the door of the more genial season. To what extent, and for how many of us, has he opened the door of a brighter and more genial clime! He was an April man, an awakener, full of light, full of prophecy, full of vernal freshness and curiosity — hardy, tender, coy, genial, frank, elusive, simple, joyous, and with the fibre and quality of the primal man.

THE BURIAL-PLACE OF JOHN BURROUGHS BY HIS BOYHOOD ROCK AT ROXBURY, N.Y.

In his youth, in one sublime line, John Burroughs voiced the faith and trust that guided him through life. That line is engraved on the tablet which marks his last resting-place:

I stand amid the eternal ways.

THE END

APPENDIX

ASSOCIATION TESTS

The responses made by J. B. to two lists of association test-words are here recorded as likely to interest students of psychology and of personality. Asked to give the first association that should come to mind on hearing the word, his responses, with the exceptions indicated, were promptly made. The first list was made, November, 1913; the second, undated, was perhaps a year or two later.

Head: My head.
green: I see green fields and green things.
water: Water — I see water, drink water, smell water — think of the wet of woods and fields.
to sing: The word 'sing' rings in my ears.
dead: I think of my dead.
long: William J. [Long] is about the only one I know.
ship: Why, I see a ship at sea — with sails spread.
to pay [some hesitation]: I don't think of anything — the Devil's to pay.
window: Well, these before my eyes.
friendly: Seeing so much about the friendly road, friendly stars, rocks, etc.
to cook: Well, I think of my cooking bacon every morning.
to ask [hesitation]: What does it mean? [hesitation] It doesn't suggest anything.
cold: Well, just being impressed with the cold of to-day.
stem: Dear! [as though tired of the experiment] — the stems of fruit and —.
to dance: Well, I see people dancing.
village: Well, Roxbury.
lake: Gould's poor empty lake — finished for the winter.
sick [long hesitation]: Well, I think of sick people — Angie [a niece, sick at the time].
pride: Well, pride goes before a fall.
table: Well, the table here.
ink: Ink in my fountain pen — it blackens my fingers and I lose my temper.
angry: Somebody was angry yesterday p.m.
needle: I see a needle.
to swim: Well, I see boys swimming.
voyage: A trip across the water, in ships.
blue: Blue sky.
lamp: Lamp here in our room.
to sin: As I never sin myself, I guess I'll have to think of Tammany.
bread: These nice loaves here.
rich: Mr. Ford.
tree: The lone tree on the hill [on the homestead farm].
to prick: It doesn't suggest anything especially — unless I make up something — somebody being pricked — 'hard to kick against the pricks.'
pity [hesitation]:

'It was pitiful!
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.'

yellow: I see a buttercup.
mountain: Hack's flats across there.
to die: 'Perchance to dream — for in that sleep of death what dreams may come.'
salt [laughs]: Those apples you dosed with salt [instead of sugar].
new: My new book.
custom: Custom House in New York.
to pray: Animals that prey upon one another.
money: The money given me the other day [to buy the Homestead farm].
foolish: Poor old foolish Joe Thompson I knew in my youth.
pamphlet: That crazy one that came to me the other day.
despise: [hesitation] What *does* despise suggest? I might rake up something — the way my wife uses the word.
finger: Well, my own fingers — poor old customers. Then I think of Whitman's line — 'O waves, I have fingered every shore with you.'
expensive: [long pause] Well, I think how expensive the trip is to California.
bird: Well, my bluebird here that nested on the porch — the whole family came back this fall and looked in.
to fall: I see Rowland falling down the precipice at Trenton Falls.
book: Well, my! my! — the world of books — the book I am reading now on 'The New Knowledge.'
unjust: The unjust judge.
frog: Shea's frog in the spring.
to part: Our parting next week.
hunger: I'm not hungry now — I have been pretty hungry sometimes.
white: Your white dress up there — when the horse kicked us.
child: Harriet and Eleanor — I see them.
to take care: Take care lest those sparks hit you. [Sitting by the Franklin stove.]
lead pencil: The new one I got the other day and carry in my pocket.
sad: Well, well! [pause] Oh, dear! — so many thronging associations — sad people in the world — all my sad days — and poor Angie.
plum: Those plums in front of the door over Home that I gathered.
to marry: Hm! [pause] I think of my own marriage.
house: The house I built in Washington — the first house — 50, almost 50 years ago — 45 — 46 years ago.
dear: Oh, I see deer in the woods — the one I saw running in Bronx Park the other day.
glass: Well, the one I look in every day, in the bathroom.
to quarrel: I think you and I never had a quarrel.
fur: The nice fur of the fox John killed the other day.
big: Well, big Tim Murphy. [A man of his boyhood recollection.]
carrot: The row of carrots in the garden.
to paint: [laughs] John Shea's picture he painted [the bath-tub].
part: Your hair being parted on one side.
old: Old men I have seen and known — and my own white hairs.
flower: The herb Roberts by the door-step that got nipped by the frost last night, and look sick, poor things!
to beat: The egg I beat in the morning when I make pancakes.
box: The box I see under the shed every day.
wild: That wild scream I heard the other night. [The cry of a strange animal.]
family: What a happy family we are here.
to wash: I see you and Adella washing desperately there, and how sometimes it annoys me.
cow: Cow? [pause] The cow I saw go by here this afternoon.

friend: Well, [pause] the good friends I've lost — Myron, Mr. Browne, and —
luck: Well, my own good luck — especially this present year.
lie: What liars those Tammany men are!
deportment: What fine deportment John Shea has!
narrow: The narrow-minded people in the world whom I pity.
brother: My own brothers — Hiram more [than the others].
to fear: Well, what I wrote in the essay — how science has abolished fear so that we look on all the forces of nature as friendly, if we have a mind to make them so.
stork: The storks I saw the other day in the Bronx and asked if stork brings babies, and they showed me the one that was [This unfinished answer is probably garbled in the hurried writing.
false: Those false acorns we picked up the other day.
anxiety: [pause] Well, — the anxiety my father used to experience when he had a sick horse.
to kiss: I think of the last time I kissed anybody — which is ages ago.
bride: The bride I saw this summer at Slabsides.
pure: The pure in heart.
door: The big barn-door up here, out of which I had my barn-door outlook.
to choose: 'To choose the better way.'
hay: The hay-mow up where the junco built her nest.
contented: How contented I am at Woodchuck Lodge — under certain conditions.
ridicule: I myself seldom ridicule anybody.
to sleep: Oh, I think of the many beautiful sleeps I have had on the porch here — the stars keeping watch.
mouth: I think of a certain very kissable mouth I know.
nice: Those nice girls that were here yesterday.
woman: The better half of man.
to abuse: Well, how many people abuse their stomachs.

In this second list, the words left blank brought no ready responses.

Iron: glittering metal (visualizes).
round: orange. "
shoe: a foot.
ugly:
hand: I see a hand.
dear: darling.
roof: of a house.
doctor: you.
dark: blackness. "
leaf: a maple leaf trembling in the wind (visualizes).
good: a thousand things. "
book: a book.
music: I hear strains of music (no, *think* of them).
foot: a foot (visualizes).
baby: Ed's baby.
full:
water: I see water.
yellow: I see the color — a yellow house.
busy: bee.
hair: the flowing hair of women.

field: the fields at home.
cake: the cake on the table.
proud: a horse.
fire: a flame leaping up.
help: hired help.
paper: the paper I write on.
again:
money: I feel it in my pocket.
awake:
far: the stars.
night: the stars.
head: a multitude of heads.
mountain: Bald Mountain.
white: white snow.
home: there's but one home.
butterfly: a yellow butterfly dancing by on the wind.
noon: the noon-mark on the old house.
bell: dinner-bell.
danger:
snake: I see one gliding along.
ink: the bottle of ink.
stairs: in the Old Home.
garden: I see the garden at the Old Home.
high:
year: the circling seasons.
sick:
watch: mine in my pocket.
boy: a multitude of boys.
ready:
stork: I see a long-legged bird, a blue heron —
I don't see it bring a baby.
pay: pay-day in the office at Washington.
sweet: sugar.
question: the great questions.
key: I see a key.
stupid:
day: sun shining.
apple: the apples on trees — rosy.
Mary: a sweetheart I had.
floor: the old kitchen floor.
never:
ship: I see a ship.
green: green fields.
love:
wages: hired man.
red: red flannel in the sunlight.
dinner: the dinner we just had.
sit:
diamond: I see something sparkling.
long: William J. Long.
five: five fingers.
beer: I see it in a glass.
sun: I see it in the heavens.
house: I see the old house where I was born.
stick: I see a stick on the ground.

handsome:
table: the table just cleared.
dance: I see them dancing at Byrdcliffe.
head: a brown head with hair.
sweetheart:
swim: I see boys swimming in the water.
ring: a plain ring on a finger.
nurse: I see a child nursing.
go: to Egypt.
dress: the dress you have on.
ask:
sick: my sickness two years ago.
pretty: girls.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL DATA

TAKEN BY DR. ALES HRDLIČKA, *February* 2, 1918

TRIBE. *Mr. John Burroughs* SEX ♂

MEASUREMENTS

No. *x* Age, *81 y.*
Deformation of head, *none*
BODY: *In good condition for his age:*
Stature, *167.8 cm.*
Max. finger reach, *171. cm.*
Height sitting, *88.5 cm.*
HEAD: *large, oblong, moderate height*
Length, *21. cm.*
Breadth, *15.9 cm. Cephalic Index, 75.7*
Height, *13.6 cm.*
FACE: *medium, symmetric*
Length to nasion, *11.5 cm.*
Length to crinion (*sm. hair lost*)
Breadth, bizygom., *13.6 cm.*
Diam. front min., *10.5 cm.*
Diam. bigonial, *10.3 cm.*
Nose: *long*
Length to nasion, *5.8 cm.*
Breadth, *3.6 cm.*
Nasal Index: 62.1 cm.
Mouth:
Breadth, *5.6 cm.*
Left Ear: *Ears rather large*
Length, *7.1 cm.*
Breadth, *4.1. cm.*

MISCELLANEOUS.
Chest: *abt. medium*
Breadth at nipple height,
Depth at nipple height,
Left Hand: *Hands rather small*
Length, *17.8 cm.*
Breadth, *8.7 cm.*
Left Foot: *Rather small*
Length, *25.3 cm.*
Breadth, *9.4 cm.*
Left Leg: *sm. affected by age*
Girth, max. ——
Weight of Body: *134 lbs.*
(With shoes, but without outer garments.)

OBSERVATIONS

Color of skin, *medium*
Color of eyes, *grey, with brown spots*
Color of hair, *orig. dark brown*
Nature of hair, *near straight*
Moustache, *orig. brown with reddish cast*
Beard, *orig. fairly dark brown with sl. reddish cast*
Forehead, *medium*
Supraorb. ridges, *medium*
Eye-slits, *horizontal*
Malars, *submedium*
Nasion depress, *well developed*
Nose, *convex*
Nasal septum, *horizontal*
Lips, *medium*
Alveol. progn., *none*
Chin, *medium promin., rounded*
Angle of l. jaw, *submedium*
Body and limbs, *show ageing somewhat, but in fair condit.*
Toes, *normal*
Breasts, ——

PHYSIOLOGICAL.
Pulse, *not quite right*
Respiration, " " "
Temperature, " " "
Time of day,
State of health, *not best just now*
Strength:
Pressure { r. hand, *30 Kg.* / l. hand, —— }

TEETH

1st { upper { r. / l. } / lower { r. / l. } }

2nd { upper { r. / l. } / lower { r. / l. } }

Dr. Hrdlička writes concerning the foregoing:

All that can be said in addition about these records is that they show a remarkable state of preservation for such an age; that the stature has evidently suffered as yet but very moderately through senility; and that Mr. Burroughs was never of more than moderate height, about 5 cm. below the general average of the Old Americans. With this he possessed a large, oblong head, approaching that of the old pre-Norman Britishers.

The face, hands, feet, and development of body in general indicate a not very robust muscular development — rather slightly sub-medium.

The facial parts are of about average dimensions, except as to the nose, which is long. This as well as the rather large size of the ears was probably connected to some extent with the advanced age of Mr. Burroughs.

The color of his hair and beard would tend to place him among the brunets; the eyes however show that there was a mixture in his family of brunets with some lighter element.

Despite the anthropologist's supposition that Mr. Burroughs belonged to the brunet type, the preponderance of evidence would seem to place him in the blond class. All his relatives that I have seen (and they are many) are distinctly of the blond type; and from many sources it seems clear that before his hair whitened, J. B.'s hair was of light or medium brown, rather than dark brown, with beard and mustache of slightly reddish cast. The skin was very fair, thin, and of rosy hue.

The anthropological measurements give no hint of certain features of the head which impressed an ordinary observer — the unusual development, the full and prominent forehead and supraorbital ridges, and the prominence of the back-head.

Mr. Burroughs used to call attention to 'the weaker side' of his face, the left side, the muscles of which, with the naso-labial fold, were less marked than on the right. There was also a slight deflection of the nose. While scientific measurements are not to be gainsaid, the external ear, which was unusually well formed and set close to the head, appeared small, rather than large.

LIST OF BOOKS BY JOHN BURROUGHS

Notes on Walt Whitman as Poet and Person. 1867.
Wake-Robin. 1871.
Winter Sunshine. 1875.
Birds and Poets. 1877.
Locusts and Wild Honey. 1879.
Pepacton. 1881.
Fresh Fields. 1884.
Signs and Seasons. 1886.
Indoor Studies. 1889.
Riverby. 1894.
Whitman, A Study. 1896.
The Light of Day. 1900.
Literary Values. 1902.
The Life of Audubon. 1902.
Far and Near. 1904.
Ways of Nature. 1905.
Bird and Bough (poems). 1906.
Camping and Tramping with Roosevelt. 1907.
Leaf and Tendril. 1908.
Time and Change. 1912.
The Summit of the Years. 1913.
The Breath of Life. 1915.
Under the Apple Trees. 1916.
Field and Study. 1919.
Accepting the Universe. 1920.
Under the Maples. 1921.
The Last Harvest. 1922.

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